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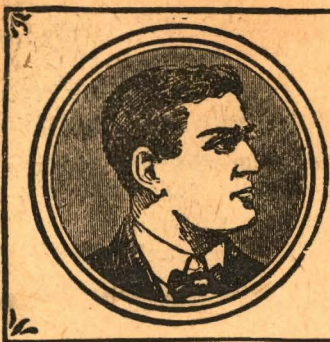
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NICK CARTER WEEKLY

**MIGNON DUPREZ,
THE FEMALE SPY**



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NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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MIGNON DUPREZ, THE FEMALE SPY;

OR,

Patsy's Fight for Adelina.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENEMY PLOTS IN SECRET.

Adelina de Mendoza, of Valparaíso, was now Mrs. Patrick Garvan, of New York, and if you could have looked into her blushing, happy face, you would have known that she was glad; that she was perfectly satisfied with her bargain.

Congratulations were showered upon the two from every side. The élite of the city of Valparaíso were there at the wedding; some of the best people from Limache, Quillota, Casa Blanc, and Santiago were also present. The president of the republic and several of his cabinet officers were there; the American minister was present with two members of his household, and the bride had been showered with presents from every side. The chief of police of Buenos Ayres made the trip across the country with his wife, Adelina's sister, in order to see the wedding, and old Lafont, who adored Patsy, as Nick Carter's young assistant, came with them.*

Altogether it was a function never to be forgotten by those who attended it.

*For the courtship of Patsy, and the scenes and circumstances which led to this wedding, our friends should read the preceding number of this weekly. It is recommended that in order to get the entire history of this adventure of Patsy's, that the five preceding numbers be read.

Don Carlos de Mendoza, the bride's father, gave a wonderful reception in honor of his daughter immediately after the wedding, and when at last the happy couple, with their servants, boarded a special train for Lial-Lial, near which place the summer home of the don was located, it was a great party that followed them to the station, and the quantity of rice and old shoes that were disposed of might have fed and shod a company of soldiers.

It was then the second week of December—midsummer in that part of the world, for their December is equivalent to our July—and the mountain home of the old don, which he had placed entirely at the disposal of his daughter and her husband, was an ideal spot.

There Patsy passed the two happiest weeks of his life; weeks without a care or a thought save the tender watchfulness and devotion he gave to his beautiful bride; and they rode and walked around the seventy thousand acres of land which surrounded the old house, a part of which was built before South American history, as we know it, began.

And then, when the two weeks of the honeymoon were past, an invited party came out there to join them, and so for another two weeks the old place was the scene of festivity, of joy, and of pleasures never to be forgotten by those who participated in them.

A word of explanation is perhaps due the reader right here.

Patsy was in South America on a special mission.

A meeting of government spies from various European countries had been appointed to be held at Buenos Ayres on the fifteenth of November. Circumstances had transferred the place of meeting to Valparaiso, and had also deferred it until the last day of the month, and the purpose of this meeting of spies was to formulate plans by which a war between the United States and Japan could be brought about.

The United States secret service had got wind of these facts. Patsy, who was already on his way to Buenos Ayres, had been cabled to, and the matter left in his hands. With him on his trip, was his friend William—or "Billy"—Studley, and the two had worked together to the end that the spies had been driven out of Buenos Ayres before the meeting could be held.

But they merely transferred their activities to Valparaiso, and there Patsy interfered with their plans again by traveling by rail across the continent, while the conspirators were going around via the straits of Magellan. It was on that trip across the continent that he met and learned to love Adelina de Mendoza, who was the sister-in-law of the chief of police of Buenos Ayres, Patsy's good friend.

There was another woman in the case, too; a Señora Valdez, as she was known in that country; but in reality, Mignon Duprez, an international spy of great prominence among her kind; a beautiful woman, as unprincipled and unscrupulous as handsome.

This woman and one Colonel Von Huysen were the real leaders of the conspiracy; and they were ably seconded by a Baron De Glers, from Austria; Monsieur Lozier, from France; Captain Fritz von Altberg, from Germany; two men named Marriott and Creighton, Englishmen, and others. In all there were eighteen of these conspirators.

Patsy, accompanied by Studley and a lieutenant of police, with a stenographer, managed to be present at the meeting without themselves being discovered; and at the crucial moment of that meeting it was interrupted by the chief of the Valparaiso police, accompanied by many of his men, and Von Huysen, with all his followers, were arrested charged with conspiring against friendly nations on Chilean soil.

Immediately thereafter Patsy cabled a full report of everything that had happened, and, of course, representations were made in Washington to the different governments concerning the affair; and, although Patsy did not know the result of that, he understood that there could be but one. Each of the governments would repudiate all knowledge of the affair, and the spies who had been engaged upon the business would find themselves discredited.

They could not be held as prisoners in Chile, of course. There was no precedent for that; but they could be sent out of the country by different routes, and, as their occupation was gone, there was little idea that they would resume their plotting; for now, of course, the immense sums of money that had been placed at their disposal to bring about the war were withdrawn, and the spies not only found themselves out of jobs, but placed in positions where there was very little hope of securing others; at least, until this affair had blown over.

There were four in that bunch whom Patsy had reason to believe would seek reprisal against himself and Studley. They were Von Huysen, the baron, Von Altberg, and the woman, Mignon Duprez; and when these four people were ordered out of the country by the police, they had coolly placed themselves under the protection of their ministers, and defied the authorities.

For Von Huysen, and the others knew that many weeks, possibly months, would elapse before diplomatic usages would deprive them of that protection because of their participation in the so-called conspiracy; and they knew, also, that their ministers would protect them just as long as they could do so without giving offense to the government to which they were accredited.

And so it was that at the time of Patsy's wedding, and during the time that he and his bride were passing their honeymoon in the mountains, Von Huysen and Von Altberg, the baron and Madam Duprez were all still in the city of Valparaiso, or near it.

When he permitted himself to think about it at all, he realized that they were only biding their time to work a reprisal upon him.

He had spoiled the pet scheme of their lives; he had kept them out of fortunes they would have made had they succeeded; he had lost them their employment, and he had made it impossible to secure other positions of the kind; at least, until the affair should have blown over, and some other incident should arise to place it among the forgotten things.

Moreover, Patsy had once given Von Altberg a terrible thrashing, which that professional duelist was not likely ever to forget; Studley had ripped open Von Huysen's cheek with a rapier, in a duel in Argentina, and forever spoiled his beauty—for until then he had been a handsome man, indeed; the baron had felt the weight of Patsy's displeasure in a blow that had knocked him out—and Madam Duprez hated him because he had not fallen a victim to her wiles.

So there were many seemingly good and sufficient reasons why these people should seek reprisal against Patsy and Studley; and our two Americans, when they asked themselves the question, knew only too well that the four were waiting in the country for the sole purpose of "paying back the score."

During the weeks that Patsy was in the mountains

with his bride, he gave her daily instructions in the art of self-defense; and he found her an apt pupil, indeed.

He taught her how to shoot a pistol and a rifle, and taught her so well that she became almost as expert as he was. Studley gave her lessons in fencing until she handled a rapier like a master-at-arms, and could sometimes even worst Patsy at the game.

Already she could ride a horse like a Comanche Indian, and he taught her the use of the American lariat, so that she became an expert at that, too.

In many ways Adelina was as brave and self-reliant as a man. She was her father's favorite child; her mother having died in her infancy, and she had been a constant companion of her father for years; and the old don was of the school that had always believed in teaching girls how to take care of themselves in all emergencies.

The first week in January found Patsy and his wife back again in Valparaiso, at the home of her father, and it was agreed between them that they should remain another two months there with the don, when they would all go north together, leaving Studley in charge of the don's affairs; for Studley had at last found his opportunity as manager for Don Carlos' immense estates and business affairs.

It was not known to Patsy, until after the wedding, that he had married the daughter of the richest man in Chile. He had never thought a word about that, and nobody had told him. But the fact remained that there were only two daughters to inherit that immense wealth; his own wife, and the wife of the chief of police of Buenos Ayres.

The old don carried his riches easily. He owned immense estates in the country, for the one near Lial-Lial was only one of many; he controlled two banks in Valparaiso, and another in Santiago; he owned warehouses, stores, and residences without number, and he was a director in almost every company of importance in the country.

It was the second day after their return to Valparaiso when Patsy first came face to face with any of his enemies.

He and Studley were walking down the street together toward the hotel, when they saw approaching them on the same side of the thoroughfare, Von Huysen and the baron.

Von Huysen's wound had healed, but it had left an ugly scar on the left side of his face, from the corner of his mouth almost to the point of his eye, and it gave him a hideously sinister appearance.

The recognition was mutual; and Studley said quickly to Patsy:

"It will be like the baron's cheek to speak to us, Patsy. What shall we do?"

"Ignore them totally."

"But if they insist upon speaking?"

"Ignore them."

"Suppose they step in front of us to stop us?"

"Knock them out of the way, then. I will have nothing whatever to do with them, and they may as well know it at once. If any of that bunch gets in my way, he will be thrown out of it mighty quick. Just treat them as if they didn't exist; as if you didn't see them at all, and then if they crowd—strike; and if you strike, strike hard."

They were by this time within speaking-distance, and the baron, taking off his hat, made a sweeping bow, while his face became sinister in that wolfish smile which was peculiar to him.

"We are well met, gentlemen," he said, "since we were on our way to interview you;" and he paused, standing directly in front of Patsy. He stood his ground, too, although Patsy continued straight ahead without appearing to see him.

And then they collided—and, as they did so, Patsy acted.

CHAPTER II.

THE FEMALE SPY'S PROPOSITION.

Patsy had continued to look directly over the head of the baron; nor had he noticed what Von Huysen was doing, save for what he could see out of the corner of his eye; but he could see enough in that way to know that the German was conducting himself toward Studley exactly as the baron was acting toward him.

The young detective made no reply whatever to the baron's remark, and he really supposed that when De Giers found that he intended to ignore him, he would step aside and allow him to pass.

But the baron evidently had no such intention, for he stopped and stood firmly in his tracks until Patsy was close against him.

And then he had no time to do anything, for on the instant that their bodies touched, Patsy seized the baron by the shoulders, and with one mighty wrench sent him spinning like a top into the middle of the street; and he spun so that at the end of it he lost his balance, and fell sprawling to the ground.

And Von Huysen was treated in much the same manner by Studley—Billy Studley, of whom Nick Carter said that, with the exception of Sandow, he was the only man he had ever known as strong and powerful as himself.

Von Huysen's conduct was identically the same as the baron's, save that he did not speak; but he did walk directly up to Studley without offering to turn aside—and the instant he did so, Studley seized him by the shoulders, turned him around, and with no gentle force planted the toe of his boot where he believed it would fit the best.

Without so much as turning their heads, our two

friends walked onward; but they had not taken half a dozen steps before they heard some one running behind them, and Studley turned just in time to avoid a murderous attack from Von Huysen, who had pulled a sword from his cane, and, angered beyond endurance by the indignity he had just been made to feel, had rushed after him to slay him.

But Studley was carrying a cane also, although it concealed no sword inside of it; and now he brought it around with terrific force, so that the weapon in Von Huysen's hand was broken short off, and the blade sent whirling into the street.

Then Studley seized the man, whirled him around again, and held him.

"Von Huysen," he said, "it would serve you right if I called an officer now and gave you in charge for committing a murderous attack in the streets. There is proof enough of it. Do you think I had better do it, Patsy?"

"No," replied Patsy, with utter contempt. "Kick him into the street, and let it go at that. Don't bother with him."

Studley suited the action to the word.

He pushed Von Huysen from him with a force that sent him sprawling, at the same time using that toe a second time; and this time Von Huysen measured his length on the pavement.

But this time Studley did not turn his back. He knew that the man was crazed with anger, and he believed it would be like him to draw a pistol and fire, if he happened to have one in his possession.

Von Huysen's face was livid when he rose to his feet, and the scar stood out like the welt of a whip across his face.

But somehow, by a supreme effort, he managed to control himself, for he stood panting for a moment, looking upon Studley's smiling face, and Patsy's expression of unconcealed amusement.

Then, without a word, he turned and rejoined the baron, who had picked himself up and was awaiting him a little distance off.

And the baron, as the two turned away, again raised his hat and bowed and smiled, just as though he had not been flung ignominiously into the middle of the street; but it was that same wolfish smile of his, and it meant danger.

"By Jove!" said Patsy, as they moved on together slowly, "I believe that the baron is the most dangerous of the two."

"Certainly he is," replied Studley. "Von Huysen, in his own way, is no coward. He has got grit and pluck and strength. The only thing about this meeting was that he had no idea that I was as strong as I am. I honestly think that he believed himself to be more than a match for me."

"Well, he is undeceived about that now."

"But the baron, Patsy, is a plotter; a schemer; a layer of traps. He is the man to fear, for he will scheme and plan against you until he finds a way to make you suffer; and, Patsy, I tremble sometimes when I think of the things he may try to do."

"What, for instance?"

"He will try to hurt you through another, old man. He will try to hurt you through Adelina. Watch over her, Patsy. Don't let her ever be for a moment without somebody to guard her, for it is through her that they will try to strike at you, I am certain."

"I have thought of it," said Patsy gloomily. "That is why I was reluctant to consent to Don Carlos' plan to remain here two months longer. But I couldn't refuse."

"No."

"And so four days ago I sent to Buenos Ayres for—whom do you think, Billy?"

"Terrence O'Toole, eh? The Irishman who acted as our coachman."

"You are right. The chief has taken him on as one of his detectives, since we came away from there. He told me when he was here at the wedding. So I wrote to the chief and asked him to lend Terrence to me for two months, as a special body-guard for Adelina."

"And is he coming?"

"He will be here to-night."

"Possibly Adelina may object to having a body-guard chasing around after her wherever she goes, Patsy?"

"No, she won't. I have talked with her about it. She sticks to the customs here of always taking a woman on the street with her, anyhow, so now she will merely have a man along, who is ready and capable, at any moment, to fight at the drop of a hat. Look yonder, Billy; do you see who is coming down the street now?"

"By jingo! It's that female spy."

"Yes. Mignon Duprez. It seems that our enemies are out in force to-day. By all the signs, Von Altberg should be somewhere around."

"I see him, Patsy. He's about a hundred yards behind her on the opposite side of the street. I wonder what they are up to, anyhow?"

"Some deviltry; you may be assured of that."

"Do you suppose the Duprez woman means to speak to us?"

"It would be like her."

"And what shall you do this time? We can't very well pitch her into the street; it wouldn't look well, you know."

"Hardly."

"She means to speak to us; I can see it in her face now."

"Well, we'll let her talk; or, rather, I will. If she speaks, you go on ahead a little distance and wait—and head off Von Altberg, if he tries to come too close."

"Be careful of that woman, Patsy."

"Oh, I'll be on my guard. I hardly think she will try to stab me in the street. That is not her way."

"She might throw vitriol in your face or pepper in your eyes, or do you some delicate attention like that."

"No; that is not her way, either."

"She's a striking-looking woman, all right, isn't she?"

"Yes. There are those who would call her handsome. If it weren't for the boldness of her eyes——"

"She might be really beautiful. I agree with you. She is going to speak, all right. She is working her smile on you now."

A moment later they met, and Mignon Duprez stopped in front of Patsy, almost as the baron had done.

"Good morning, Mr. Garvan," she said, with a smile, and at the same time extending her hand, which Patsy pretended not to see. "It is a beautiful morning, is it not?" And she dropped the hand again, but without any evidence of confusion because it had been refused. Studley raised his hat and moved onward.

Patsy raised his hat and replied:

"Good morning, madam. I had supposed until lately that you had left Chile."

"The wish was father to the thought, was it not?" she asked maliciously, but with her set smile, showing her white teeth.

"That is quite possible, madam."

"But you should have known that I couldn't leave without first offering you my felicitations upon your new happiness."

"I am sure that would have been very kind of you, madam, if only it were intended so; but I am positive that it is not."

"Are you?" She laughed boldly in his face. "Well, possibly you are right. It may be that you are too happy for your own good, Don Patricio," and she laughed again.

"I don't know why you should hate me so," said Patsy gloomily. "We played at a game and you lost. Are you so poor a loser as that?"

"I hate you? Oh, no, indeed! I might even have loved you if you had given me half a chance, my friend."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Patsy fervently; so fervently that she flushed with anger, and darted a look at him from under her long lashes that was anything but kind.

"I hope the bride is well?" she said interrogatively.

"Quite well, thank you."

"And may I also express the hope that she will keep well—and happy?"

"You may."

"But, Don Patricio, you should guard her carefully—very carefully. There are pitfalls, even in Valparaiso, into which she might stumble. I have been wondering what I could do to add to her happiness—and yours, señor."

"You might leave the country. It would add infinitely to our happiness if you could be persuaded to do so."

"Would it? Really? Well, I will bargain with you. How much?"

"What do you mean?"

"How much would it be worth to you to have me leave the country?"

Patsy studied her curiously.

"I wonder if you are in earnest," he murmured, half to himself.

"Certainly I am in earnest. I will go for a price, but it must be a big one. I am broke, you know. I haven't got a hundred dollars left to me. I couldn't pay my fare out of the country if I wanted to go; and I do want to go. You can buy me off. In fact you can buy the lot of us off. The baron started out to make such a proposition to you this morning. I was afraid that he would get ahead of me."

"So; that was what he wanted, was it?"

"You have seen him, then?"

"Yes. He will tell you about it. We didn't converse, you know."

The woman laughed long and loud.

"I can imagine what happened," she said. "But, really, Mr. Garvan, do you care to talk business with me on the proposition I have made?"

"I will think about it, madam. I will think about it."

"Then think quickly, for I want an answer. The whole bunch are going to get after you on the same proposition, and it is their idea that the one who touches you first, gets the cash. I'll go if you pay me for it—and if you make it enough, I'll take the others with me."

CHAPTER III.

FOREWARNINGS OF MADAM'S PLOT.

"I don't quite like the way you put it, madam," said Patsy. "If you come to me and ask me to loan you sufficient money to get out of the country—to take you back to Europe, for instance, I think I might be persuaded to advance it."

"Of course it would never be returned," she said boldly.

"Naturally I understand that, madam."

"But you don't like the idea of buying me off. Is that it?"

"Well, perhaps it is. But, you see, I would enjoy Chile so much better if you and your associates were out of it, that, really, I am more than half-inclined to bargain with you."

"Very well, how much would you 'loan' me for the purpose?"

"That would depend upon circumstances. For instance, if you could be persuaded to take the baron with you—I am sure that he would be delighted to go."

"How thoughtful of you. And what an undeserved compliment you pay the baron in that statement. You regard him as quite as dangerous to your peace and happiness as I am; no?"

"Possibly, madam."

"And what about the others? The two Germans?" She laughed when she asked the question.

Patsy shrugged his shoulders.

"You may leave them behind or take them with you, as you please. They do not concern me."

"You mean, I suppose, that without the baron and me to direct them, they would be harmless?"

"Practically so."

"Well, let's get down to cases. What am I offered?"

"When one has something to sell, madam, one puts a price upon it."

"So? Perhaps you are right. Very well, I will take ten thousand dollars, cash in hand, and agree to take the whole bunch out of the country within a week."

"Do you think you can do it?"

"I know I can; and I tell you frankly, Patrick Garvan, if they remain—if I remain in this city, some harm will befall your wife. And you know it. I know you well enough that if it were not for her, you would laugh at me and my proposition. But you have got her to consider now. She is an innocent party, and should not be made to suffer for the hate that is boiling against you. But she will suffer if we remain here, and you know it. I am not telling you this in the form of a threat; I am telling it to you as an established fact. For me, I am thoroughly sick of the whole business. We played the game against you and lost; you won. I have been an international spy since I was eighteen, and I know the game from end to end. I have nothing on earth against you save that you beat me, and now you've got me flat broke ten thousand miles from home. I want money enough to get back there and to keep me in comfort until I find another job. Your private affairs do not concern me at all. I don't care a picayune whether you are happy or unhappy. If you produce the collateral for me to get out, why, I'll go and leave you in undisturbed possession of the field. Now, that is the whole thing in a nutshell, and if you want to talk business, I'm yours to command."

It seemed like a fair statement of the facts of the case, from her standpoint; at least Patsy felt that he could so regard it.

"I'll think it over and give you your answer this evening," he told her.

"Why not now?"

"Because I wish to think over the arrangement, somewhat. However, I think we can come to an agreement."

"Very well; this evening, then. At what time and where?"

"Suppose we meet here, where we are standing now?"

"It is rather public, isn't it?"

"All the better for our purposes; and I don't propose to walk into any small traps that you and your friends might originate."

"Afraid of us, are you?"

"I am cautious, but not afraid. I will meet you right here, with a carriage, and I will take you for a drive with me while we are talking."

"That will be nice; only won't Mrs. Garvan be jealous?" She asked it with a malicious grin.

"I think not. We won't discuss that."

"At what time will you meet me here, then?"

"At eight o'clock."

"Very good. I wish you good morning, Mr. Garvan."

"I bid you good morning, Madam Duprez."

"I am known here as Señora Valdez."

"You are known to me as Mignon Duprez, a French spy, madam."

She passed on down the street, after bestowing a bow and a mocking smile upon him, and Patsy started after Studley, whom he saw some distance ahead of him, apparently engaged in conversation with Von Altberg.

But the latter moved away rapidly as Patsy approached, and the young detective found Studley in laughter.

"He hadn't any stomach to wait for you to come up, Patsy," he said. "The man is deathly afraid of you."

"What did he have to offer, Billy? What have you been talking about?"

"Why, the four of them want to be bribed to get out of the country. That is what the baron and Von Huysen were after, when we met them."

"And that is also what madam wanted."

"I suspected as much when I heard what Von Altberg had to say."

"The madam makes it sound very plausible, Billy."

"I suppose she does. She could make anything sound plausible if she tried. But even if I considered it, Patsy, I would look upon it with a great deal of suspicion. It doesn't seem to me, particularly after what has occurred this morning, that they are to be persuaded out of their revenge so easily."

"I don't care a rap about the two Dutchmen if I can get the madam and the baron out of the country," said Patsy. "Without them the others would not be dangerous."

"I quite agree with you there."

"Well, anyhow, I have made an appointment with the madam to meet her here at eight o'clock this evening to discuss ways and means about it. She says she is sick of the whole business, is broke, and wants to get back to Paris, and, I think, for Adelina's sake, I ought to send her there."

"Possibly you are right. But I don't like your meeting that woman——"

"Oh, I'm going to take you with me. I shall want a witness, anyway; and by that time Terrence will be here to drive us."

"To drive you!"

"Yes. We will do the talking in a carriage. I thought it would be better. Terrence will be on the driver's seat, where he can hear all that is said, and you will be in the carriage with me."

"Patsy, do you think the woman is sincere?"

"I *think* so; I don't know. One can never tell about her. That time she invited me to her house and started in to make a confession about trying to kill me with nitroglycerin, I thought she was sincere. But I found out mighty soon that it was only a part of her play."

"And, by the same token, as you would say in moments of excitement, this business of being bribed to leave the country may be part of a play; eh?"

"It may be—yes."

"It's my own opinion that they have got something up their sleeves; something that is big and dangerous, too. Do you realize that all four of them have been after us this morning, my boy?"

"I certainly do. Madam's explanation of that was that they each wished to get to me first with the proposition, believing that the one who got my ear first would receive the dough, and would, therefore, be in a position to dictate to the others."

"Even that may be a part of their plot—to make you the more sure that they are in earnest. I would continue to look upon it with suspicion, old chap."

"I shall, of course."

"But do I understand you that if it is real, and if you are convinced that she will do as she agrees, you are inclined to pay them to get out?"

"At the present moment I am—on Adelina's account."

"Did madam name any amount?"

"Yes. Ten thousand dollars."

Studley whistled.

"She evidently thinks that you value her departure highly," he said.

"Well, to be truthful, I do. I'd give ten thousand dollars right now, and do it cheerfully, to know that those four were on their way to Europe."

"But how can you be assured that they will go, even after you have paid over the money?"

"Oh, I have already thought out a way to fix that. They wouldn't fool me any after the arrangements were once made. They wouldn't finger any of the cash till they got started, and they wouldn't start from here, either."

"Eh? What, then?"

"I would send them across to Argentina, and put them under the surveillance of my brother-in-law, the chief,

and also of Lafont. They wouldn't get a cent of the cash until they were on board a ship bound for some port in Europe. That is the way I would fix that."

"Do you suppose they would agree to it?"

"It would be that or nothing."

"Patsy, I cannot disabuse my mind of the idea that it is all a plant. I believe it is all a part of some plot they have hatched up among themselves. The very unity of action among them this morning suggests that. Then, think again how they hate you and me. Think how Von Huysen must hate me every time he looks in the glass. He would almost as soon have lost his life as to have had his appearance spoiled; and he was a handsome man before I marked him."

"There is no gainsaying that."

"I don't believe, Patsy, that he has any idea of leaving the country until he has got even with us, or at least tried to do so."

"Well, leave him out of it, then, and come back to the woman. She may be sincere enough."

"We'll admit, for the sake of argument, that she is; do you suppose that Von Huysen and the others are going to let her get away from them?"

"I fancy she will do about as she pleases about that."

"And the baron?"

"The baron considers only his comfort and the amount of money he has in his pocket. He would not remain here a moment for the sake of revenge if he could get away with some money about him. The revenge could wait. He would never forget, and if the time ever came to do us an ill turn he would do it; but he wouldn't stay here to do it if he could get away."

"Perhaps not."

"Here, where we are, he is dangerous, and so is madam. With those two gone, the others are like Samson without his hair—they would be practically harmless."

"And so you have decided?"

"No; I haven't decided, and I won't till I see that woman to-night. But on Adelina's account I am now inclined to call madam's bluff."

"Well, I'll be ready to go with you to-night, if you want me to."

"I certainly do, Billy."

CHAPTER IV.

FOR THE SAKE OF ADELINA.

Terrence O'Toole arrived late that afternoon from Buenos Ayres.

"It's a delight to be with you again, Mr. Garvan," he told Patsy, when the latter met him at the train. "And I owe me new job with the chief to you, don't I?"

"No, Terrence, you owe that to yourself. Was he perfectly willing that you should come to me now?"

"Entirely so, sor. I have a l'ave of absence till you're through wid me."

"We will walk to the house, Terrence, it isn't far; and while we are doing so I will tell you what your duties will be."

"Yes, sor."

"You are appointed a special guardian to watch over my wife. Four of those conspirators are here still, and I am convinced that they are plotting to do some harm to her, believing that it will be the surest way to hurt me."

"And, faith, they'd be right about that."

"Yes. Terrence, you are here for the sole purpose of taking care of her. You may not relish the job of following a woman around all day, but that's your job."

"Sure, sor, I'd relish anything at all that I could do for you. And if it's your swate wife that you want me to take care of, I'll do that same wid all me heart."

"I thought you would, Terrence."

"I will, sor."

"I don't want you ever to leave her alone, out of your sight, when you are away from the house, and I don't want you to leave the house on any pretext wher she is in it. If somebody should ask you to go on an errand around the corner—even if she should ask you herself to do so, I want you to refuse. Say that it is against my orders."

"I will, sor."

"If she goes out, go with her. If she walks, keep three paces behind her. If she enters a store, don't wait outside, but go in with her. If she calls at the house of any of her friends, don't wait outside, but go into the court and keep as near the door of the room she enters as possible. If she rides in the carriage, get upon the seat beside the driver. If she leaves the carriage, you leave it with her. If we go out together, you tag along just the same as if I were not present. In a word, Terrence, no matter who she is with or where she goes, I expect you to guard her the same as if she were alone, and I don't want you to relax your vigilance for one instant. Even if I should send for you, refuse to come. I won't send for you, of course, but some one might represent that I had done so."

"I understand, sor."

"I will double the pay you are receiving from the department, and you shall have a reward besides that, at the end of your service."

"As far as the reward and the pay are concerned, sor——"

"We won't say any more about it at present. I'll fix that myself. Now, Terrence."

"Well, sor?"

"I have got rather a delicate sort of an appointment for this evening, and I have been thinking that I would

have you drive me so that you could be a witness if necessary, to what happens. I——"

"I'm very sorry, sor, but I'll be otherwise engaged. I have me juty to perform, and I'll not l'ave that for any man; not even you, sor."

"Eh? What's that?"

"Sure, sor, are ye afther forgettin' already what ye've jest been telling me? Faith, you can take wan of the city drivers or wan that belongs to ye'r father-in-law; but Terrence O'Toole has other fish to fry, so he has."

"Good boy!" exclaimed Patsy, slapping him on the back.

"Were you testing me a bit, sor?"

"No. I did not mean it that way."

"Have you explained to the señora what I'm here for? Does she understand that I'm to be her shadow wherever she goes?"

"Yes."

"How does she take it?"

"Oh, she thinks it unnecessary, but she is quite willing. The hardest part of your job will be to refuse to do little errands for her. If she is out on the streets, she will want you to run into another store for something she has forgotten. You are not to do those things. It may offend her sometimes, but you've got to stand that."

"I'll obey orders, sor."

"I know you will."

"I'd like to have a look at that woman—Madam Duprez is her name?"

"Yes."

"I haven't seen her, you know. The three men are all known to me by sight, but the woman I don't know."

"You can't mistake her, Terrence. She has big, round, black eyes that look you through and through, boldly. She has black hair and a very fair complexion, regular features, and is what you would call a strikingly handsome woman. However, it isn't necessary that you should know her, for all women and all men must look alike to you in the duty you have to perform. You must consider that each one of them is dangerous until you know they are not."

"That's the idea."

Terrence was duly installed in his position, and he won his way at once into the good graces of his mistress by saying, when he was presented to her:

"Faith, señora, we ought to get along famously, for we both love the same man. If I were a woman, now, you wouldn't like that, but seeing that I'm a man, I think ye'll like me the better for it."

"He has told me all about you, Terrence," she replied to him, "and I like you very much indeed already."

"Thank you, señora. Then I'm going to ask you right now, in the beginning, not to ask me to disobey the orders he has given me about you. Sure, it's a lucky man Mr. Garvan is to get you, so he is."

"Why, Terrence?"

"Well, ma'am, it isn't so much the beauty av yer face, though there's none to bate it in the worrld, I'm thinkin', but it's the beauty of your soul that's shining through your eyes at this blessed minute."

"Terrence, I'm afraid that you brought that famous blarney stone over from the old country with you, and that you carry it around in your pocket and take it out and kiss it every time you have a chance."

"Sure, there's no blarney about that. It's only the truth."

At eight o'clock precisely that evening Patsy drove to the place of appointment, with his friend Studley on the seat beside him.

Madam was already there, and she stepped forward briskly as the carriage drew up at the curb; but when she saw Studley she drew back haughtily.

"You are not alone," she said coldly.

"No," replied Patsy. "I have brought Mr. Studley along to act as a witness for both of us."

"And to bring me up before the courts to-morrow for blackmail, I suppose."

"I had not even thought of such a thing, madam."

"His presence isn't necessary to our consultation."

"Perhaps not; but it is my pleasure that he should remain with us."

"Then the affair is off, Don Patricio. I won't discuss it in the presenc of a third party. I won't do that."

"As you please, madam."

"You prefer that I should remain in the city, then?"

"I prefer not to be dictated to by you. I am the one to do the dictating, and I shall do it if we treat at all, madam."

"Let Mr. Studley step out of the carriage and withdraw out of hearing. I will enter it, and we can talk here, where we are."

"Very good. I will do that."

The arrangement was soon made, and Patsy found himself vis-à-vis with the notorious woman spy.

"What is your decision about the—the 'loan' of ten thousand dollars?" she asked.

"My decision," he replied at once, "is that you shall have the money in cash, under certain conditions."

"Very well; what are the conditions?"

"I will say, before I name them, that you must accept them without any sort of qualification or amendment, for I will consent to none."

"What are they?"

"First, you must take the baron away with you. The others, also, if you can do so, but I insist upon the baron."

"I agree to that. I will take them all."

"Second, you must all leave here to-morrow morning on the train for Buenos Ayres——"

"But that is impossible."

"You will be good enough to let me finish. You will leave to-morrow morning on the train for Buenos Ayres. You will be received at the station, when you arrive there, by the chief of police of that city. While you are in that city, you will all remain under his surveillance. You will not be prisoners, but you will not be at liberty to go beyond the city limits until he escorts you aboard of a ship."

"That is a very charming program you have fixed up," she sneered.

"That ship," continued Patsy, as if he had not heard, "will be the very first one that sails from there directly for a European port—any port in Europe."

"Is there more?"

"The chief himself will remain aboard the ship with you until she sails. He will leave it with the pilot, and the last thing before leaving he will give you, in your hands, ten thousand dollars in gold. Your fare across the water will already have been paid, so that will be velvet. Now, madam, there is the answer to your proposition. How do you like it?"

"And do you think I would be fool enough to accept that, Patsy Garvan?" she answered.

"I think you would be very foolish not to accept it—if you have told the truth in saying that you and your friends are broke."

"Why can't we sail from here?"

"Because I have chosen to arrange it in another manner."

"But there are ships that sail from here——"

"I told you in the beginning that I would not qualify the conditions I have made. You may take them or leave them, madam."

"Well, you will have to qualify one of them, or all bets are off. I simply cannot get ready to go to-morrow morning. That is out of the question."

"To-morrow night, then. There is a night train."

"No; I must have at least until the morning of day after to-morrow."

"Very well. I will consent to that, if you accept the other conditions."

"Will you give me some of the money down, before we leave here?"

"Not a cent. Not a sou."

"But there are the railway tickets, and other expenses to meet."

"I will attend to the railway tickets; and as for the other expenses, you told me that you have a hundred dollars. Speak now. Do you accept or not? Yes or No?"

"Yes."

CHAPTER V.

PATSY ENTERS THE LION'S DEN.

Patsy turned, and, without another word, leaped from the carriage to the pavement; then he spoke to the woman.

"Madam," he said, "I will meet you at the station half an hour before starting-time, the morning of the day after to-morrow. We need not meet in the meantime."

Then, before she could make any remark, he said to the driver:

"Pancho, you will take madam to any place she desires to go, and leave her there. You may then return to the hotel for Mr. Studley and me."

He turned away, then, but she called to him.

"Mr. Garvan, one moment," she said.

"Well, madam?"

"You will not blame me if I cannot induce Von Huysen and Von Alberg to go with us?"

"No; but you may tell them, for me, that if they remain behind, I will have Von Huysen arrested for attempted assassination in the streets of the city this morning; and I have influence enough now to get his back against a wall for it, too. As for Von Alberg, I will have him fired from the city in short order. That's all. Good night."

He turned away, then, in earnest, and rejoined Studley, and together they started for the hotel.

"Billy," he said, as they moved rapidly along, "I am going to do a little old-fashioned detective work to-night. I want to hear that consultation between those four people."

"Gee, that would be fine! But how are you going to do it?"

"I've got a plan. I know where they are living. The chief found that out for me. I've got a disguise ready here at the hotel, and I'm going to get into it now. By the way, do you remember José, Mignon Duprez's former servant?"

"Certainly I do."

"Well, he is likely to show up here at the hotel in the course of half an hour. If you see him come in, stop him, will you, and tell him that I'll be on hand presently?"

"Sure."

They were entering the hotel when this was said, and Patsy left his friend at once, going to the clerk to obtain the key to a room he had taken. Then he nodded again to Studley, and disappeared up the stairs.

It was just twenty-five minutes later when Studley saw José enter the hotel by the front door and look carefully around him; and he seemed to be on the point of backing out when Studley hurried forward and stopped him.

"Wait a moment, José," he said. "Come this way a moment. I want to talk to you."

José followed him over to a quiet corner and stood

with respectful attention while Studley conveyed the message that Patsy had given him. Then he nodded gravely.

"I will wait for the señor if you think it is best," he said.

"Certainly. He expects you. He will be here in a moment, I expect."

Studley noticed then that José was chuckling audibly.

"What the devil are you laughing at, José?" he demanded.

"I was laughing at you, Billy," was the reply, in Patsy's own voice. "I wondered if this disguise would serve me, and I thought I would try it on the dog first. If you did not know me I don't think they will; eh?"

"Well, by gracious! Patsy, you've got it perfectly, even to the voice. I say, where is José, anyhow?"

"He is up at the plantation, near Lial-Lial. He sent down word to me this morning that they had found out he was there and had sent for him, and he wanted to know whether he had best come down or not. It was then that this idea occurred to me. I wired him to telegraph them that he would be there to-night or to-morrow morning, but on no account to come. And so I am going there to keep the engagement for him."

"You are literally taking your life in your hands, Patsy."

"Suppose I am? What of it? It isn't the first time I have done it, by a long shot. An opportunity like this one can't be neglected, anyhow."

"I wish I could go along with you."

"Well, that is impossible."

"I might rig up in a disguise as one of the men from Lial-Lial, and go with you."

"No. It wouldn't do. We cannot even guess what those people wanted of José, that they sent for him. He fled into the country because he was afraid they would kill him."

"Possibly that is what they have sent for him for now."

"No. He isn't worth the risk they would run in putting him out of the way. No; they are wanting him to do some more of their dirty work. They have some use for him. They know he is a rascal and will do anything for a few dollars, or to save his skin. All that is what I am going to find out."

"What shall I be doing in the meantime? Shall I wait here for you?"

"No; go home and keep Adelina company."

"Yes; and lie to her, I suppose, about what you are up to."

"Nothing of the sort. Tell her exactly where I have gone and what I am doing. I'm not going to do any lying to my wife, now or ever. If she hears anything different from what I tell her, she'll know it isn't true; and as long as I am a detective, and I now expect to be

one for the rest of my life, she has got to get used to my going into what you call danger. But there won't be any danger in what happens to-night, or I miss my guess."

"How soon are you going around there?"

"As soon as the evening train gets in; that will be in about twenty minutes. I think I will get along up toward the station now."

"Shall I go that far with you?"

"No. It isn't safe."

"I'll wait up for you, anyhow."

"Then you'll probably sit up all night. I haven't the least notion that I will be home before midday to-morrow. Tell Adelina not to look for me before evening."

He hurried away, then, toward the station, but he took good care to go around it and approach it through the freight-sheds, away from the passenger-platform, for it had suddenly occurred to him that one of the conspirators might be at the train to meet José.

He walked out along the tracks a little distance, and when the train drew slowly in toward the station he climbed aboard the platform of one of the cars, entered it, and sat down.

And so it happened that when the train ran alongside of the platform, he rose with the others, and passed out with them, exactly as if he had been a passenger on the train.

It was well that he did so, for almost the first person he saw on the platform was the baron, who was peering anxiously from side to side expectantly; nor was he long in espying the pseudo José.

"Ah, garçon," he said at once. And then, in Spanish: "It is well you came. We were afraid that you might disappoint us."

"Not I," replied the supposed José gruffly; and mentally he added: "Here is the place where I run the risk. If I can pass muster with the baron and madam, I'll be all right. And I think I can." Aloud, he added: "It is an honor to have you meet me, señor."

"We were afraid that you might not find us easily."

"It is true. Well? What use have you for me, señor?"

"That you shall learn later. Just now your mistress is awaiting you. Come. We will ride."

The baron had provided a carriage, and they were soon driving rapidly through the streets toward the house where Patsy already knew the four had taken up their abode.

All houses are much alike in Spanish countries, save that some are larger—or smaller—than others.

The one into which Patsy was presently introduced in the guise of José might have been, so far as the interior plan of it was concerned, the same that Señora Valdez had occupied at the time of the meeting of the conspirators; and in the great salon of the building, he

found the other members of the party seated at a table with wine-glasses before them.

It was evident, too, that they were having some sort of a discussion, for the faces of all were deeply serious.

Von Huysen looked up and scowled when the baron entered with "José." Madam smiled and nodded, as if she had forgotten that her former servant had once betrayed her, or seemed to do so. They had never been quite certain whether he was a traitor or not.

Von Altberg scowled, also; but as he never did anything else than frown, that was not surprising.

"I have brought him, as you see," proclaimed the baron.

"Take a seat over at the opposite side of the room, José," directed madam. "I will advise you also to listen with all your ears, for then it will not be necessary to repeat things to you. We will have use for you later on—something for you to do, and it is necessary that you should be posted regarding our plans. We are taking you into our confidence, not because we trust you, but because if you do not do as we say, you will never live to tell about it."

"May I be made acquainted with what has occurred during my absence?" inquired the baron. Then he turned to madam and bowed. "You had not returned when I went out, madam."

"No. You had been gone five minutes when I returned."

"Ah! And what said the gallant young American, who is so ready with his hands? *Peste!* but I would like to pour vitriol into his eyes."

"So would we all, for that matter."

"What said he about the money, madam?"

"He will supply it."

"Good!"

"But only on conditions. I have already repeated them here, and now I will tell you about them;" and with deliberation, studying the baron closely as she did so, she related all that had taken place between Patsy and herself, little thinking that Patsy himself was seated less than twenty feet from her at that moment.

"That means," said the baron, when she had finished, "that we would practically be prisoners from the moment we boarded the train for Buenos Ayres until we were out on the Atlantic Ocean, bound for Europe."

The madam nodded.

"That is precisely what he intended it to mean," she said.

"And it renders impossible the other plans we had formed, doesn't it?"

"Yes; and he was shrewd enough to know that it would checkmate us in any schemes we had."

"So I take it," the baron went on coolly and deliberately, "that it is now merely a question with us whether

we are willing to forego our revenge in consideration of the ten thousand dollars, and our fare home to Europe."

"You have hit the nail on the head, baron," said Von Huysen gruffly.

"Precisely. Are we to vote upon the question, colonel? Because if we are I shall cast my vote now for accepting the cash and getting out."

"Well, you'll vote alone, then."

"Oh, no, he will not," said madam quickly. "I vote with the baron."

"You, Mignon?" Von Huysen started to his feet, and the scar on his face turned livid.

"Yes, I," she retorted.

"You would desert me, Mignon?"

"No; I would take you with me. What folly it is to stay here under the circumstances?"

"I will stay here till I rot but what I will square accounts with that viper!" said Von Huysen roughly. "If you and the baron wish to go, then go. Leave Fritz and me half the money and go your way."

Madam looked at him and smiled.

CHAPTER VI.

AN APPARITION IN THE DOORWAY.

That smile of the madam's seemed to irritate Von Huysen even more than it was intended to do, for with a growl of fury he took one quick step around the table to her side, and he seized her roughly by the arm, pulling her to her feet before she could resist him.

But then, as he did pull her toward him, her disengaged hand sought the folds of her dress and flew upward again; and Von Huysen released his hold upon her and fell back two or three paces, uttering an oath of pain and rage as he did so.

"Curses on you, Mignon! You have stabbed me!" he said.

"Oh, no, I did not," she retorted. "I only pricked you. It will perhaps teach you to keep your big rough hands off me. If you get too intimate, Colonel Von Huysen, I may drive that little poniard all the way in next time. Sit down, and don't act like a child."

Sulkily he dropped back upon his chair; and there was no comment upon this scene from any of the others. They had looked upon it unmoved; apparently uninterested.

"Now, baron," said madam, "do you vote that we accept the money and go away, keeping to the conditions that Garvan has made?"

"It is the only way in which we can get the money, isn't it? By keeping to the conditions?"

"Yes."

"Then I vote to accept it, and go."

"And you, Fritz Von Altberg?"

"I say, with Von Huysen, give us half the money and we will remain."

"How are we to give you any of the money at all since we do not receive it ourselves until we are out on the ocean?"

"You can make it a condition of your going that he gives you half-down before you start," broke in Von Huysen.

"Oh, no, I cannot. I tried that, and he said very plainly that we should not have one cent in advance. He meant it, too."

"Then I say refuse it all, and let him go to the devil with his money!"

"My dear Von Huysen," said the baron blandly, "speak for yourself alone, if you please. As for me, I accept the young fool's terms without qualification. If we all go, it means twelve thousand five hundred francs apiece for us when we reach the other side. Quite a tidy sum in Paris, where one knows how to spend it. If you two remain behind, it means twenty-five thousand francs apiece for Madam Duprez and myself. By the way, Mignon, is it a condition of the payment that we all must go?"

"No," she laughed. "He cares nothing at all about Von Huysen and Von Altberg, whether they go or stay. But he does make the condition that you and I must go."

"La-la! So? The young gentleman is shrewder than I gave him credit for being," chuckled the baron. "He has, then, no fear of our two good friends, here?"

"None whatever, with you and me out of the way. He told me to tell Von Huysen that if he stayed behind, he would have him arrested for attempted assassination in the public streets, and that he had influence enough here to have him shot for it. I think he told the truth about it, too."

"And our good friend Von Altberg? What did he say of him?"

"I hesitate to tell you. I will soften it. He said that he would have him driven from the city inside of twenty-four hours."

The expression on the faces of the two Germans during this dialogue was a study; and now Von Huysen left his chair again and took the center of the floor.

"Mignon," he said coldly, "have you gone over to the enemy?"

"No; but I am considering on which side my bread is buttered."

"You have decided to accept this proposition, and go?"

"Yes."

"And you, baron?"

"Yes."

"That leaves Fritz and me here with less than three hundred South American dollars between us."

"Well, nobody asks you to remain. You can go with us and have two thousand five hundred dollars in gold;

or, as the baron puts it, twelve thousand five hundred francs when we arrive in Paris."

"Mignon, can you tell me how I can eat the cake and have it, too? Can you tell me how I can return with you, how we can all go together, and yet not without the revenge we crave? If you can do that——"

Madam raised her right hand and pointed silently across the room toward the supposed José.

"Why do you suppose I sent for him?" she asked.

"I'm sure I don't know, unless it was that I might cut his heart out for betraying us as he did. I supposed you had brought him here to make an example of him."

"Oh, no. I have brought him here to make use of him."

"Tell us how."

"First, then, you must consent to the plans that the baron and I have agreed upon. You must put yourselves absolutely in my hands and let me direct this business. You know very well, Von Huysen, that you never did have any brains for planning. There is no one better than you are to carry out a plan, once it is laid out for you, but to originate one—well, you never did it."

"You are right. You and the baron are the ones for that. I am only an executive."

"Now that you have curbed that ugly temper of yours and are willing to talk reasonably, I will promise you that you shall eat your cake and have it, too, as you aptly express it."

"Himmel! If you can do that——"

"I can and will do it, but you must be content to let me do it in my own way."

"I will. I will."

"And ask no questions; merely do as you are told."

"I agree, Mignon."

"Then I promise you your revenge and the money, too—José!"

"Yes, señora." Patsy started to his feet and stood waiting, in the attitude he had often seen José assume. The madam was silent a moment, evidently selecting her words; but presently she said, speaking slowly and impressively:

"It would have served you right had I called you here to put a knife into your heart, or poison into your vitals, for I am satisfied that it was you who freed our prisoner from the wine-cellar, and you who did much to betray us to the police. However, I have no proof of either, and the chain and bars did look as if the prisoner liberated himself. But I have work for you to-morrow night; work which it will not be difficult to do, and for which I will give you, when it is done, two hundred of your silver dollars. It is all the money I have, or I would give you more. But if you have done everything that I direct you to do, and have done it faithfully and well, I will find an extra fifty for you somewhere."

"Sí, señora," said Patsy, in a low tone. He thought

that now he was about to hear the details of her plot; but he was yet to learn something of the depth of Mignon Duprez's character.

"Listen, then. There is a mail-train that leaves for Buenos Ayres at 12:30 each night. Do you know about it?"

"Sí, señora."

"It carries two passenger-coaches and one sleeper. It may be that I shall want you to ride on that train to-morrow night. I will not know until almost time for it to start whether I will or not; but, however, I want you to stand directly in front of the door of this house at twelve o'clock to-morrow night, and be prepared to do exactly what I shall tell you to do. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, señora."

"There will not be time to tell you much, but I will put an envelope into your hand which will contain money and directions. You will follow those directions to the letter. You will have to take a journey. You will have a companion of whom you will take charge. Your companion will be a young woman, of whom you will say that she is your sister, who has been ill and has not been right in her mind since then. That is all. You may go now. Here is five dollars for you to spend, but I want you to keep sober. I shall not want you again until midnight to-morrow night; but remember, if you are not on hand then, you will be dead before the sun rises. You may go."

Patsy bowed and moved toward the door. He had just reached it when there was a loud rapping upon it, for it opened upon the court, and the *portero* would have passed any one inside the *patio* of the building.

The plotters looked at one another in alarm, but madam said coolly:

"Open the door, José."

Patsy obeyed her.

He reached out his hand and threw open the door suddenly, and then he half-started back with consternation, for there, upon the threshold, confronting him, stood the real José.

The two were so alike that it was as if one were looking into a mirror at his own reflection. Patsy, of course, understood the situation, but he was the only one present who did.

The real José uttered a sharp cry of fright, and turned as if to escape; but he did not run. The baron and the two Germans started to their feet with guttural oaths. Madam, cooler than any of them, calmly but quickly drew a revolver from the folds of her dress and fired it point-blank at Patsy, for the coming of the real José had told her instantly of the mistake that had been made.

Patsy felt the sting of the bullet as it pierced his clothing and grazed his side, burning like a hot iron as it passed; but instantly and before she could fire again,

he reached out his hand, seized José, jerking him into the room, leaped out of it himself, pulled the door shut after him, cleared the railing with a bound, dashed across the *patio*, and was out of the building upon the street before those he had left behind him could get the door open.

An empty hack was passing at the moment, and he leaped up beside the driver.

"Drive!" he said. "Quick! Turn the first corner!" and he seized the whip himself and plied it with all his strength so that the horses broke instantly into a run.

"*Bueno!*" he said, when the corner was turned. "You will earn five dollars if you obey me. Turn your horses around and drive back slowly the way we came. I will get inside. Do not stop for anybody."

He sprang to the ground and got inside the hack while the horses were turning; and then, as the man drove slowly back past the house that Patsy had just left so hastily, he saw the baron and Von Huysen rush into the street—and pause.

They looked up and down the street for a moment, and then they turned and slowly reentered the house; and instantly Patsy left the hack again and followed them, after paying the promised sum to the driver.

"You may wait down there around the corner for me till I come," he said to him; and then he glided past the still sleeping *portero*, climbed over the rail that ran around the balcony, and presently arrived again at the door of the room wherein he had posed as José.

There were painted glass windows in the doors, and with his knife he carefully scraped away a portion of the paint the size of a dime. Then he applied his eye to it.

He could see into the room, but he could not hear anything that was said. Only the murmur of voices came to him; but he believed that he could judge very nearly of what was said by what he saw.

José was the center of the group, now; the others surrounded him, and Patsy knew that the man was telling about the telegrams, and that the others had already guessed who it was that had personated him.

Finally he left the house and returned home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FEMALE SPY'S DUPLICITY.

Patsy would have succeeded perfectly in his plans against the four conspirators, if only José had remained at Lial-Lial, where he belonged. But the man had played double, and by appearing when he did, had effectually put a stop to Patsy's further plans.

The young detective, however, had learned enough to know that madam had some plot by which, as Von Huysen had tersely expressed it, they "could have their cake and eat it, too."

She had not said enough to give Patsy any idea as to how she intended to carry out her schemes; he only realized that she had formulated some plan by which she hoped to abduct Adelina; but what she intended to do with her after the abduction, there was no way of finding out.

The woman had talked as if Adelina was to be placed in charge of José, to be taken somewhere, and the mere idea of it seemed preposterous, for Adelina was not a child to be led around by a string and made to do whatever she was told.

He dismissed the idea of their getting possession of her, almost at once, and gave his thought to wondering what they would do, now that they knew he had been present at their consultation.

Would it necessitate a change in all their plans, or would madam find some way in which to brazen it out? he asked himself; but he had himself driven directly home and at once went into consultation with Adelina herself and Studley. Terrence was also called in to hear what was said, and to offer any suggestions he might think of.

He was not surprised when quite early the following morning José appeared at the house with a written message for him, from madam. He had more than half-expected that she would send for him; in fact, she had said as much at the consultation the preceding evening.

"I think it is quite necessary that we should have an interview at once," madam wrote. "The arrangement was that we were not to see each other again until we met at the station to-morrow morning, but there were things that happened last night which renders it necessary that I should have another talk with you before that time. Will you come to the house to see me? Or do you prefer that I should meet you on the street, as we met yesterday? You may send word to me by José."

He thought a moment, and then he said to José:

"Tell madam that I will call upon her, where she is living, within an hour; and, José!"

"*Si, señor.*"

"If you happen to remain in the city later than twelve o'clock to-day, you will sleep in prison to-night, and for many nights thereafter. Go!"

He had intended, when he sent the reply to madam's message, to take Studley with him to the appointed interview, but he found that Billy had already gone downtown with the don, and so presently he started out alone to keep the appointment.

Arrived at the house, he entered boldly and presently tapped upon the door of the library.

Madam opened the door in person, and she smiled as cordially as if they were the best of friends.

"Enter, Don Patricio," she said. "I wondered if you would have the courage to come here—and alone."

"The courage?" he replied. "It did not occur to me that it was an act of courage."

"Don't you know that there are three men in this house who would gladly put you to death if they had the opportunity?"

"The opportunity—and the courage; yes. Three men and one woman. But you did not call me here to tell me that, did you?"

"No. You make a mistake about the woman, señor. I do not seek your life. It is a matter of indifference to me whether you live or die."

"I have no doubt of it, madam."

"It is true that I shot at you last night, but then, the circumstances were such that my act was excusable; don't you think so?"

"Possibly."

"I must compliment you upon the excellence of your disguise last night. You succeeded in deceiving me entirely, and but for the timely appearance of the real José, I don't know what might have happened."

"Why did you send for me this morning, madam?"

"To ask you if you took seriously the scene you saw enacted in this room last night."

"If I took it seriously? I don't think I comprehend you."

"Do you suppose that I really had any plan for getting in some act of revenge or reprisal against you, and getting your money, also?"

"It certainly had that sound, when you expressed it."

"Or did you guess the truth? Were you not smart enough to read exactly what I was doing, or, rather, what I was attempting to do?"

"Still I do not comprehend."

"You heard enough, did you not, to realize that Von Huysen was exceedingly difficult to handle? You saw how stubborn he was; how he insisted upon remaining here to revenge himself upon you?"

"Certainly."

"Do you realize that I have known Von Huysen a good many years, and that I know him thoroughly?"

"I suppose you do."

"I can twist him around my little finger, and all the time lead him to believe he is having his own way."

"I can quite believe that."

"Last night I felt that it was necessary that I should take him out of the country with us; that I should take him and Von Alberg, as well as the baron, but I knew the man well enough to understand that he would not stir a peg unless he was led to believe that in some way he should have his revenge, also. Mr. Garvan, he trusts me implicitly. If I told him that I would bring the moon to him at midnight to-night, he would confidently expect the moon served up at the appointed time."

"Well?"

"Once on the ship, and out at sea, there would be no getting back for him. He would be obliged then to con-

tinue on the voyage to Europe with us; but the trouble was to get him on board the ship."

"Go on, please."

"Knowing him as I do, I realized that there was but one way in which that delicate task could be accomplished. That was why I sent for José. That was why I pretended to have a plan by which your wife could be abducted and taken away in José's care. I can assure you that there was absolutely nothing in it save for the hoped-for effect it would have upon the decision of Von Huysen; and you saw how readily he accepted my plans."

"Yes. Your story is very plausible, madam. I only wish I could believe it."

"Your own good judgment should convince you of its truth."

"Possibly."

"How could I hope to abduct your wife between dark and midnight to-night? But if that could be accomplished, how could I hope to place her, unresisting, in charge of such a man as José? And if the two might have been consummated, how could I hope that you would still live up to your agreement about the money, after she had disappeared, when you would know positively that I, or we, were responsible for the disappearance? Doesn't it all seem preposterous?"

"I will admit that it does."

"So you see, do you not, that all my plotting and planning was not against you, but was only to induce the two Germans to go aboard the ship with us?"

"I am beginning to believe that you are speaking the truth; or, at least, for the sake of the argument and the situation I am willing to regard it as the truth."

"Thank you. You realize, also, don't you, that the fat is in the fire now, because of your act in coming here?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. You're doing the frying; I am not."

"Well, it isn't pleasant to have the grease spattered all about when one is frying things, and that is metaphorically what you did last night."

"What is the purpose of this interview, madam?"

"First, to tell you what I have already said; second, to ask you if you are still prepared to carry out your agreement with me?"

"Certainly."

"We are to leave here, then, as arranged, by the morning train to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"May I ask who will accompany us to Argentina?"

"No. You will not be made aware that anybody is accompanying you—unless you do something to compel the attention of your unknown escort."

Just the faintest suggestion of a frown appeared for an instant on madam's face. It was evident that she did not like this arrangement.

There might be one man in that unknown escort, and there might be several, but she was not to know who they were at all.

"Don Patricio," she said, and there was admiration in her voice and her eyes, also, as she looked at him, "you should have been chief over a department of the secret service. You would have become famous. You have the qualities, the daring, and the cunning."

"Thank you. Am I to understand that you are prepared to carry out your part of the agreement for to-morrow morning?"

"Yes."

"And do you take the entire party with you?"

"No. Von Huysen and Von Altberg have already severed their relations with the baron and myself. We quarreled last night after your abrupt departure. The quarrel continued until this morning. When it ended, they left the house, and I have no idea where they have gone. You have only yourself to thank for that. Had you been content to leave affairs in my hands, as I asked you to do, all would have been well. As it is, I am afraid that you must still be burdened with those two men."

"Your duplicity is so consummate, madam, that I never know what to believe when you talk. But we will let that pass. The baron still votes with you, I suppose?"

"Certainly."

"And you and he are practically ready to take your departure, now that thoughts of the two others have been dismissed?"

"Yes. But you may ask him yourself, Don Patricio, inasmuch as he is now standing directly behind you."

It was true, for as Patsy turned sharply, he discovered that the baron was within ten feet of him, having entered the room silently; and now he was bowing low to Patsy, with his best dancing-master style, and with that strange, wolfish smile that was at once a menace and a caress.

"My felicitations upon your happy escape last evening, monsieur," he was saying; but Patsy paid no attention to him. He turned again to madam and said sharply:

"Very well, madam. Since you and the baron are practically ready to take your departure, there seems to be no reason why you should wait until to-morrow morning. You will, therefore, if you please, be at the station for the twelve-thirty train to-night; the train by which you intended José to leave here—with his sister. For the present, I will bid you good morning."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN THE BLOW FELL.

Patsy could hear madam's laugh ringing after him as he went out. It was a strange laugh, too, he thought.

It sounded very much as if it were in derision of herself and the baron; as if in his last statement, Patsy had somehow foiled them again, and she was telling the baron in that laugh of hers: "I told you so." But he shrugged his shoulders and went on, well content with what he had done.

His route took him past the office of the chief of police, and he stopped there a moment, saying to that official, when he saw him:

"I wish you would have your men look about the city to-day and find out what has become of the two Germans, Von Huysen and Von Altberg. I have reason to believe that they have gone into hiding somewhere for a time, and I would like to root them out if they have done so."

He had long ago withdrawn his letter of credit from the bank in Buenos Ayres, and had deposited it, instead, with one of the banks controlled by his father-in-law; so now he took his way there, and in passing through on his way to the private office, stopped long enough to draw a check for some ready cash that he wanted in his pockets; and as he passed it in at the window, the teller said to him:

"I hope, Señor Garvan, that you received that other thousand dollars all right, this morning?"

"What's that?" asked Patsy. "What other thousand dollars?"

"Why, for the check you sent here by a messenger, just as the bank opened this morning."

"I sent no check here by any messenger this morning," said Patsy. "What are you talking about?"

The teller looked frightened. His jaw dropped.

"Wait a moment," he said; and he began looking among his canceled checks nervously.

Presently he found what he was searching for, so he passed it through the window to the young detective.

"That is it," he said. "It was brought here by a messenger as soon as we opened, this morning. Indeed it was the very first check I cashed to-day. Do you mean to say, sir, that you did not send it? That it is a forgery?"

"I certainly did not sign that check, and therefore it is a forgery," said Patsy. "It is a clever one, too. I don't know that I blame you for cashing it, under the circumstances."

It was certainly a bold one, too, for it was made payable to Fritz Von Altberg, had been indorsed by him, and underneath his name on the back of it were written the words: "Indorsement correct;" and again the signature of Patsy had been cleverly reproduced.

"That was rather a bold move on their parts," he mused half-aloud. "I will deduct it from the ten thousand I intend to pay over to madam, and let it go at that, I think." To the teller he added:

"Don't give yourself any uneasiness about this matter. I think I know how to get it back all right, or the equivalent for it. I will ask you to say nothing whatever about it for the present. Let it go exactly as if it were really my own check. But hereafter don't pay out anything on my check unless it bears this mark." And he made a private mark upon it that was unmistakable, although not noticeable. Then he passed on into the counting-room.

But after a little he returned to police headquarters and again interviewed the chief, to whom he said:

"I have about made up my mind that you won't find those men to-day, chief. It is quite evident to me that they have looked up a hiding-place where they believe they will not be discovered;" and he related the episode of the forged check.

"You see," he concluded, "Von Altberg, who is, of course, the forger, would never have written his own name on that check if he had not been pretty certain that he could defy me. I know the man. He is a great coward, and the fact that he had committed an act of boldness is proof positive to me that he has a secure place in which to hide—for the present, at the least."

"But neither of those men can be far away—yet."

"True enough. And I don't think they are. Find them, if you can, by all means, and arrest them both when found. And now I want to borrow two of your best men to take a trip to Buenos Ayres for me. They are to act as escort to the baron and Madam Duprez," and he explained exactly what it was he wanted.

"They shall be at the train half an hour before starting-time to-night," said the chief; and with that assurance Patsy left him and returned to his home.

Nor did he leave it again until after dinner that evening; in fact, it was nearly ten o'clock when he called Studley to him and said:

"Now, Billy, are you ready to go with me? I want you to help me see those two people off."

"Sure thing, Patsy. I for one will feel easier when they are well out of town."

As they were about to leave the house, Adelina came and put her arms around Patsy's neck, and she whispered in his ear:

"Do be careful of yourself to-night, *querido mio*. I shall wait up for you until you return, you know."

"What nonsense, dear. It will be after one o'clock

before I can possibly be back here. You had best go to bed and to sleep."

"No," she replied. "I shall wait up for you."

As he was passing out at the door, he said to Terrence, who stood there:

"I'm uneasy to-night, Terrence. I feel as if something was going to happen. I want you to be especially on your guard till I return; will you?"

"Always on guard, sir."

Satisfied with that assurance, he and Studley went away.

They walked as far as the hotel, where they lingered a while, until Patsy thought it was as well to go to the station and keep a watch out there. It had occurred to him that, after all, the two Germans, having possessed themselves of the thousand dollars, might seek by that same train to get over the border into Argentina, or might even attempt now to go away with the baron and madam.

He was quite willing that they should do so, for he meant to deduct the thousand from the money he was ultimately to pay the woman. His only desire was to get them out of the country, where they would not be an hourly menace to Adelina.

But there was no sign of any of them at the station when he arrived there.

At twelve o'clock the two detectives in plain clothes arrived, and Patsy gave them their instructions. Ten minutes after he had finished with them, the baron and madam arrived, prepared for their trip across the continent.

"You observe that we are on time," she said to Patsy, when he approached her.

He nodded.

"Have you seen or heard anything of the Germans?" she asked; and he thought he saw a twinkle of maliciousness in her eyes when she put the question. He answered it with sudden inspiration:

"No, madam; but I recognized your handwriting at the bottom and on the back of a certain check that was presented at the bank this morning for a thousand dollars."

"My handwriting? On a check, Don Patricio? What do you mean?"

"I mean that my understanding tells me that you are the only one in the bunch who can write so well in imitation of another. It was very cleverly done—very. But I have charged it up against you, and now you will

receive nine thousand, instead of ten, aboard the vessel on which you sail."

"Then I won't go."

"As you please; but I think you will."

She shrugged her shoulders. In a moment she inquired:

"Who are to be my jailers, señor?"

"Your jailers, madam?"

"Well, our escort, then? Who are they?"

"The conductor, the brakeman, and other trainmen, possibly. Here is a letter for you which you may deliver in person to the chief of police at Buenos Ayres when you arrive there. I will tell you now that it will not be worth your while to write a new one to replace it, for the reason that a copy of this one has already gone ahead of you by mail. I anticipated the fact that it might occur to you to destroy this letter and write a new one to offer him in its place."

"You are a very far-seeing young gentleman, Mr. Garvan."

"I try to be."

"May I ask if there is now a ship there, ready to take us away?"

"That I do not know. My brother-in-law, the chief, will attend to all those incidentals."

"And if we are obliged to remain for a time in the city, where are we to stop and what are we to do? It is not in the agreement that we should be prisoners during that time."

"You will be housed to your satisfaction, and so long as you conduct yourselves properly, you will have nothing to complain about. But you will be watched every minute of the time. Rest assured of that."

"Well, I hope you are satisfied that the baron and I have played fair this time," she exclaimed, almost laughing in his face.

"If it were not for the episode of the check I might think so. If you care to be entirely fair, you might tell me where your two friends, the Germans, are hiding."

"Indeed, I would tell you if I knew. But I do not."

"Your train is ready, madam. You had better get aboard. Baron, take my advice, and hereafter remain in Europe where your peculiar talents are more appreciated."

The baron bowed and smiled. Then he raised his hat, waved his hand, and followed madam on board the train.

A moment later it pulled out of the station, and Patsy knew that at least two of his enemies were on their way out of the country.

He stood watching it until the red lights on the last car disappeared around a curve. Then he turned to Studley:

"I think that is the only act I ever committed which had even the appearance of cowardice," he said gloomily. "I refer to having bought off those two. But I think, Billy, that I am justified in the act when we consider all the horrors they may have been able to make my wife suffer. It was for her sake, and I really think that Nick Carter would approve."

"Bah! You can spare the ten thousand, and you'd rather give a hundred than have your wife for one hour in the power of those people," said Studley. "Come along. Let's go home."

"Shall we walk or ride?"

"Let's walk. It's a beautiful night," and so it happened that they were another half-hour in arriving at the old don's house.

As they drew near to it, Patsy felt a sudden sinking at his heart, without any apparent reason for the sensation. Unconsciously he grasped Studley by the arm and hurried him onward, so that they at last arrived at the wide door which opened upon the court, at a very rapid gait.

To their astonishment, the door, which should have been closed at that hour, stood open, and as Patsy stepped through it, he stumbled over the huddled body of the *portero*, lying almost across it, in the dark, inside.

A glance and a touch told Patsy that the man was dead, and with a call to Studley he leaped over the prostrate figure and ran with all speed for the room where he knew that Adelina should be awaiting him.

He knew in that instant that the blow he had dreaded had fallen.

CHAPTER IX.

A MURDEROUS ATTACK IN THE NIGHT.

The room was not empty, although Adelina was not there.

But Terrence O'Toole was there, lying prone upon his back, to all appearance dead, and with an ugly gash across the side of his head where he had been struck with a weapon not unlike a Cuban machete.

He was breathing yet, however, and Patsy saw that the blow had been a glancing one, not necessarily fatal; he realized, too, that the only source of information as to what had happened dwelt in the unconscious Irishman, and so he at once gave his attention to bringing him around as speedily as possible.

"Telephone to the police, Billy," he directed, "and then go to the don's room and see if he has been disturbed. Look into Anita's room, also, and find out if she was taken away with her mistress, for there is no doubt that Adelina has been abducted."

It was strange how cool he was in the face of this awful emergency; but his brain seemed to work with unusual clearness, and while he toiled over Terrence in the effort to bring him back to consciousness, he found himself thinking out plan after plan for overtaking the abductors and rescuing his wife.

He knew instinctively that this was more of the madam's planning; knew that she had done it so cleverly as to clear her own skirts of participation in the act; knew that the forged check for a thousand dollars was connected with it, in order to supply them with the funds necessary to carry out their purposes; knew that at the moment of his parting with the madam at the station she was laughing at him, understanding in advance about what he would find awaiting him when he got home; knew that the baron had been mocking him when he raised his hat and waved his hand, and delivered himself of that wolfish smile as he boarded the train.

Then, as Studley returned to tell him that the don had been left undisturbed, and that Anita was also gone with her mistress, Terrence opened his eyes and gazed wonderingly up into Patsy's face.

Another swallow of the brandy brought him around quickly, now that consciousness was returning, and in a moment he sat up, putting his hand to his head, but drawing it away instantly from the rude bandage that Patsy had already placed around the wound.

His eyes were red and swollen, and, in spite of his efforts to keep them open, they closed.

"I wish they'd killed me!" he muttered. "Sure I never thought that any such could get the best of Terrence O'Toole."

"If you can tell me what has happened and just how it happened, Terrence, I wish you would do so without delay," said Patsy, with all the composure he could master.

"It's mighty little I know about it, sor, save that that scoundrel José was wan of thim," he replied weakly.

"I could have guessed that. Tell me all you know about it, Terrence."

"It was after eleven, sor—about half-past, I think," he replied. "I was sitting in this room with the missis at the time. She had called me in half an hour before that to get me to tell her all about what happened in Buenos Ayres when you were there."

"You know, sor, you had promised her the story many times, but she said you had never told her all of it, and she wanted to hear it."

"Go on. Go on. Get down to cases, Terrence."

"Let me tell it in me own way, please, sor. Maybe then you won't blame me so much."

"Hurry, then."

"The woman Anita was here wid us. The missis told me to sit in that chair over there by the dure, and I had been there, as I say, about half an hour, mebbly, when there was a rap agin' the glass of the dure. Just a low rap, such as the *portero* would give, if you had sent a message home, and he was bringing it in to us."

"I understand. Go on."

"That's what I thought it was, I remember. Onyhow, I rose up an opened the dure; and, sor, as I trun it open, one of them divils outside dashed a handful of red pepper into me two eyes."

"Red pepper, eh?"

"I suppose I staggered back a little. I dunno if I did or not; but anyhow I jumped for him with the next instant, and I got me two hands onto him—by the throat it was, and it made him holler. And then it was that I recognized the voice av that fellow José."

"I was choking the life out of him to the quane's taste, when I got a clip side of me head that made me see all the stars that ever were—and that is all I remember about it."

"You did not see any of the men to recognize them, did you?"

"Faith, I didn't see anything at all, sor. Wid the pepper in me two eyes, I couldn't. But I heard that voice. I know that feller."

"Did you hear any other voices?"

"Not one; only, of course, the missis let out a scream when the pepper was trun into me eyes. I think, just as I was falling, that I heard a pistol-shot, but I can't be sure of that."

"Do you think you can stand on your feet now and walk, Terrence?"

"Sure I can, sor. I'm a little wake in the knees, but that'll pass prisintly."

"There is a doctor just around the next corner to the south. Can you walk that far and have your wound properly attended to?"

"I can, sor; but oughtn't I to stay here and help you, sor?"

"You can be of more help to me after you are patched up. If you can get to the doctor's by yourself, go at once. If you cannot——"

"I can, and will."

Don Carlos had rushed into the room in the meantime, and had heard the latter part of Terrence's statement. He was strangely calm and self-possessed, and, although he was very pale and rigid, he spoke with calmness. He showed himself then to be the bravest kind of a brave man.

"My son," he said to Patsy, "how did they enter the house? The *portero* was at the door, was he not? And he has been ever faithful."

"He was not unfaithful this time, sir," replied Patsy. "They have killed him."

"Killed him?"

"Yes. My idea is that two of them came to the outer door, and, while one of them rapped upon it and then stepped back away from it, the other concealed himself just outside; and then when Pancho stepped forward to see what was wanted, after opening the door, the concealed man reached around and stabbed him to the heart. That is the only way in which it could have been accomplished without giving Pancho time to raise an alarm."

"And then——?"

"Why, then, with the red pepper, the rest was comparatively easy. They came to this door and rapped. When Terrence went to the door they blinded him with pepper. The whole mistake was in his not remaining at his post, outside the door. If he had done that, this could not have happened."

"But who has done it?"

"My enemies."

"And they have taken my daughter away? They have taken her away? Alas! to what fate?"

"Be calm, sir. We will rescue her."

It was at this moment that the police arrived on the run and assumed charge of things. The chief was with

them, and he listened to Patsy's story with deep interest; particularly that part of it which related to José.

"I have suspected ever since we arrested that fellow and frightened him into a confession that he was one of a former band of bandits who used to infest the mountains above Lial-Lial," he said. "If I am correct, it is safe to assume that he has enlisted some of his former associates in this enterprise."

"And in that case they would make for the mountains with their prisoners, would they not, chief?" asked Patsy.

"I don't know about that. Since you came to me this morning, to ask me to be on the lookout for those two Germans, I have thought that I did not look in the right direction."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that they did not leave town by any of the roads that lead out of it. If they had done so, I would have discovered the fact."

"Then they were still in the city."

"No; for I have scoured it from end to end, and I would have found a trace of them if they had been in hiding."

"Then——"

"There was only one place where I did not search, Mr. Garvan; the one place where I should have searched, too."

"And that was——?"

"The harbor."

"By Jove!"

Patsy started to his feet.

"The very thing!" he exclaimed. "The very place they would select for hiding would be aboard some vessel, if they could get on one. Neither of those two men would take to the mountains. They are city bred, and city broke. The mountains would be literally a wilderness to them. Chief, let us lose no time in making an inspection of every vessel in the harbor which is the least suspicious, for I believe on my soul that that is where they have taken my wife. We must overtake them, somehow, before a day passes."

"Come, then," replied the chief. "Don Carlos, will you accompany us, or will you remain here?"

"I would only be a hindrance to you, gentlemen," said the old man. "I am too old a man to be of aid. No; I will remain here and content myself as best I can until you bring me good news. My son?"

"Yes, sir."

"Heaven bless and aid you in yor efforts. Go now."

It was a few minutes past two in the morning when the chief of police, with two of his men, and accompanied by Patsy, Studley, and Terrence, who had insisted upon being allowed to go, entered the police launch for their tour of inspection; and it was daylight when they returned again to the wharf, disappointed in their search.

While the others were attending to the launch, and while the chief was giving his men some further orders, Patsy strolled up the mole alone, very much dejected in spirit.

The men had stolen away his wife, and had left no trail behind them. There was absolutely no clue anywhere as to the direction they had taken.

To the west of him was the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean, and to the north and south and east, a limitless country. He did not know which way to turn. He had to confess himself badly puzzled.

He was not conscious that any one approached him until suddenly he heard a voice at his elbow, and that it was saying:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I take it that you are an American. Well, so am I, and I don't know how to speak this lingo down here. I'm a sailor, sir, afore the mast, and I had a berth on the *Frauline Berger* that was at anchor out yonder last night. She was a Dutchman, to be sure, sir, but I shipped aboard of her at 'Frisco, for want of a better chance. And yesterday, sir, I got shore leave, thinking she was to lay here for a day or two, and now she's pulled up her hook and gone off in the night and left me. That's the truth, sir, and I'm flat broke in a country where I don't know the lingo. I ain't got the price of a breakfast, or a drink, or a pipeful of baccy. I thought maybe you'd help me a trifle, sir, or get me a job somewhere, seein' that you're an American."

Patsy listened silently to the end of the tale; then abstractedly he took some money from his pocket, and gave the man a bill.

"Tell me about the *Frauline Berger*," he said. "You have interested me."

CHAPTER X.

A FAST CHASE DOWN THE COAST.

The sailor looked at the bill and gasped; then he said: "Say, mister, you didn't look at what you was givin' me, did you? This here bill is a ten-spot."

"Very well; you may keep it. You will probably need it all; only be careful of it, and don't blow it all in at once. Now, tell me about the ship that brought you here."

"She ain't nothin' but a German tramp, sir, and her captain is the biggest brute I ever shipped with. His name's Von Huysen, and——"

"What did you say his name is?"

"Captain Hans Von Huysen, sir. A big brute of a man he is, too, always ready to knock one of his men galley-west, if he happens to feel in the humor to do it."

"And when did you reach port?"

"We dropped anchor yesterday morning just at daylight, sir; out there off that point. It was pretty well out, but I heard the old man say that we weren't to stay here but two days. The mate dropped the idea among the men somehow that the cap'n had a brother somewheres hereabouts, that he wanted to look up; but I guess the brother found him first, for yesterday morning about two bells—that's nine o'clock, sir—there were two men came aboard of us, and one of 'em was a dead ringer for the old man, only for a scar he had on the left side of his face."

Patsy wheeled in his tracks and called aloud.

"Chief, come here!" he said. "And you, Billy. Come along, Terrence; we have got a clue at last. Now, my man"—to the sailor again—"you shall have three or four more bills just the same as that one if you can help us out. What did those men do when they went aboard the ship you were on?"

"Well, the one who looked like the cap'n—him and the cap'n embraced each other like a couple uh wimmin, and then they went below. About an hour after that the cap'n came on deck again and had himself put ashore in the small boat, leavin' the two wisitors in the cabin by themselves. The old man was gone about two hours, when back he comes with a hangdog-lookin' greaser chap, I'd call him, and they took him into the cabin, too. Then, after a while, the dago feller—they're all dago's to me, sir—come up smiling as if he was mightily pleased about something, and the cap'n made me and another sailor put him ashore over there behind the point."

"That must have been José," said Patsy to the chief.

"Without doubt. And when he was put ashore he went to find some one to help him in the work that was done last night. Go on, sailorman."

"There ain't nothin' more to go on about, sir. 'Long

about the middle of the afternoon I asked for permission to go ashore, expectin' it to be refused, and I ought to have knowed by the way it was give to me that they wanted to get rid of me.

"'All right,' says the old man when I axed him. 'You kin go, only be back by eight bells to-morrow mornin'.' I ought to have suspicioned something, but I didn't."

"And you went ashore at once, did you?"

"Yes; and filled up chock-a-block, more's the pity. But I wasn't so full but what I knowed that dago chap when I saw him, along about seven bells of the night watch."

"That would be eleven o'clock. Where did you see him and who was with him?"

"I was just coming out of a saloon a little ways up there from the water-front, and I sighted him and two other chaps skinnin' along the street toward up-town. And a little ways astern of them was the two chaps that had gone aboard the *Frauline* in the morning.

"'Ahoy, there!' I sung out to them; and the big feller that looks like the cap'n came over to my side of the street and fetched me a swipe on the jaw that sent me reeling. I wasn't any too steady on my pins, anyhow."

"Did you see any of them again, after that?"

"Aye, aye, sir; I did that."

"When and where?"

"It wasn't more than an hour afterward. I was sobered a little by that time and was trying to do some chinnin' with a couple of these Valparaiso girls, but as they couldn't understand me, and I didn't know a word they said, we didn't get along very well. But while I was chinnin', or tryin' to—it was up there on that corner—down the street comes a keelage, and when it got here where we are standing now, out climbs me two coveys—the same wot called on the old man, you know—and I sees 'em lift something out of the keelage and put it into the small boat that was waitin'. And then they takes out a second bundle and does the same with it; and then the gals I was tryin' to chin with ketched me by both arms and made me take 'em in and treat 'em."

It would be impossible to give an idea of the eagerness and the impatience with which Patsy listened to this story; but when it was finished he was ready with his questions.

"Now, my man," he said, "your ship had no cargo to put off or take on at this port, did it?"

"No, sir."

"Where were you cleared from?"

"'Frisco."

"And for what port?"

"Plumb around to New York, sir. Leastwise, that is what I was told."

"Is the *Frauline* a fast ship?"

"She's the slowest old tub I was ever in in all my life, sir. She couldn't make more'n eight knots to save her life."

"Chief"—Patsy wheeled upon the officer—"my wife and her maid are aboard that ship. They are in the power of those two fiends. My father-in-law has influence with the government. Out yonder lies a Chilean torpedo-boat. Don't you think you could get the Minister of Marine, at Santiago, on the telephone, and from him secure the loan of that torpedo-boat to overhaul the *Frauline*? Try it, won't you? And in the meantime I will have myself put aboard the torpedo-boat and will explain everything to the officer in charge of her. In that way, if he happens to be a good fellow, we will be ready to start the minute you get back here with the order. Do you think it can be done?"

"I'm sure of it, particularly as the Minister of Marine happens to be my very good friend. You may tell Lieutenant De Costa that I will return with the order all right. He may make his preparations."

Patsy flung another bill at the sailor and turned and ran toward the launch which was still at the wharf; and twenty minutes later he was climbing aboard the torpedo-boat.

And here he was surprised and pleased to recognize in Lieutenant De Costa one of the guests at his wedding; one whose face he had particularly liked, and it did not take him long to relate all the dreadful incidents of the night, and the result of them.

"I won't even wait for orders," said the lieutenant. "I know that the chief will get them, and if you say the word I will anticipate them and go right ahead without him."

But already they could see the chief waving at them from the pier, and the launch was sent back to bring him out.

In less than an hour from the time when Patsy discovered the torpedo-boat in the harbor and thought of making use of it, they were skimming like a mackerel

through the water in pursuit of the German tramp that the sailor had described.

"If the *Frauline* got under way as soon as Von Huysen returned aboard of her with his prisoners," said Patsy, addressing the lieutenant, "they should have started between one and two o'clock this morning. It is now eight o'clock, and that would give her at least six hours' start of us. If she makes no more than eight knots, as the sailor said, that would take her about fifty miles down the coast. You say we have a speed of twenty-two knots?"

"Yes. Easily that. A trifle more, I think."

"Call it twenty, to be on the safe side. That will take us eighty miles in four hours; and four hours more will be ten hours out for the *Frauline*, which would also take her eighty miles. Lieutenant, we ought to overhaul them at noon."

"We will, too, or before that."

"What will you do when you overtake her?"

"Lay across her bows and order her to stop her engines and permit me to go aboard of her. That's what I'll do."

"And if he refuses, pointing to his German flag."

"Mr. Garvan, if he flies the flag of every nation in Europe, I'll go aboard of her. No vessel shall come into a Chilean port and carry off women in that fashion."

Word was sent below to give the torpedo-boat all the power she would stand, and she seemed fairly to fly through the water.

Nevertheless, the speed seemed slow enough to Patsy, anxious as he was over the possible fate of his loved one.

It was a quarter past eleven o'clock when they sighted a vessel ahead which they had no doubt was the ship they were pursuing; but even as they discovered her, she rounded a point of land which the lieutenant said was Point Toro, and disappeared again from view.

But now the torpedo-boat was rushing ahead with such speed that the point was raised and passed in another three-quarters of an hour, and they came upon the ship they had been seeking.

She had run into Navidad Bay, but had now come about again and once more had her nose pointed toward the open sea.

"It looks to me," said the lieutenant, "as if they had put your people ashore here, Mr. Garvan."

"I was just thinking that same thing myself."

"The captain might have noticed the torpedo-boat in the harbor, and being fearful of pursuit and its consequences have insisted that he would not carry them farther than here. In that case you will have an overland chase now; and if you do, you will find a brother of mine living at San Pedro, three miles inland, who will lend you horses and render you all the aid in his power. He was also at the wedding and will recognize you. Now, I am going to stop that ship and search her. Will you go aboard with me, sir?"

"If you think I had better use the time."

"I do, by all means. We must be satisfied that your wife is not on board."

The torpedo-boat steamed directly across the bows of the big tramp and discharged a small gun, as an order for her to stop her engines.

But she kept straight on, as if she would run the little craft down, until the lieutenant, with trumpet in hand, called out:

"Back your engines, there, you scoundrel, and let me come aboard of you, or I'll sink you."

There was that in the voice of the young man which told the German captain that he had better obey, and in another moment the big ship was backing water; and ten minutes later Patsy and Lieutenant De Costa climbed aboard of her. The second officer of the torpedo-boat was with them.

They were met on the deck by the captain, who, save that he was somewhat older and was also without the livid scar, might readily have been mistaken for Von Huysen himself.

He began to sputter about an outrage on the high seas, but the lieutenant stopped him.

"You had some passengers—four of them—aboard this ship when you left Valparaiso," he said. "Where are they?"

"I had no passengers, but one. He is here now," was the reply. And even as he spoke, the burly figure of Von Altberg came out of the cabin-door.

He walked swiftly aft toward Patsy, and as he approached him suddenly raised his right hand, pointed a pistol full at Patsy's heart, and pulled the trigger.

But Patsy was quicker than he. He saw the act, and on the instant made one of those wonderful snap-shots of his, delivering it before Von Altberg had quite pulled

the trigger, and sending a ball through Von Altberg's wrist.

"Captain Von Huysen," said the lieutenant, as coolly as if nothing had happened, "you are under arrest. I will leave this officer aboard to take you back to Valparaiso."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHASE TOWARD THE MOUNTAINS.

It did not take long to determine the fact that Von Huysen and the two women had indeed been put ashore at Navidad Bay, but that Von Altberg had utterly refused to accompany him. He had evidently had enough and was anxious only to get away from that part of the world.

But when Patsy appeared so suddenly aboard the ship on which he was a passenger, and he realized that he was caught, after all, and must be returned to Valparaiso to stand trial for his crimes, he made the effort already recorded to shoot the man he hated, and only succeeded in getting a ball through his own wrist as a consequence.

The lieutenant placed his second officer in charge of the tramp and ordered her to return to Valparaiso, escorting her with the torpedo-boat, and Patsy and Studley, with Terrence, were put ashore at the spot where Von Huysen and his captives were landed from the *Frauline*.

It developed during the questioning process that José and another of his kind were with Von Huysen, and it was likely that they had volunteered to guide them across the mountains.

"Don't forget one thing, Mr. Garvan," said the chief, at the moment of parting, for he had to return to his duty in the city, "and that is that José, and probably the other man who is with him, knows every by-path in these mountains. He has been a mountaineer all his life, and a bandit most of the time. Take my advice when you get ashore, and go directly to the brother of Lieutenant De Costa. He will supply you with horses and guides. Good luck to you."

It was the longest three miles that Patsy had ever traveled, from the coast to San Pedro, but it was covered at last, and at a little before two in the afternoon of that day, Patsy found the lieutenant's brother.

His story told, the horses and men were forthcoming

at once, and within half an hour there were six pursuers on horseback, searching for the trail of the fugitives.

They found it at a little village named Santa Anita, where the party had been seen to pass, and it appeared that either horses had been in waiting for them, or that they had been particularly fortunate in obtaining some, for they were reported well mounted.

"We will overtake them by nightfall, or soon after," said Fernandez De Costa. "My *mozo* is the best trailer who ever crossed these mountains, and once we have their trail outside the village, he will never lose it. Eh, Tranquilino?"

"Si, señor," replied the *mozo*.

"But, my Tranquilino, you have a cunning fox to follow in that fellow José; no?"

"Si, señor. But I know him and his ways. He will not at first expect to be followed, señor, and if he does expect it, he will not think that it will be Tranquilino that is on his track. There is an old grudge between us, señor, and I am happy to be on his trail."

"So. I haven't a doubt of it. Confess now, that when you were of the mountains, you served in the same company of rascals."

"It is even so, señor; but that was a long time ago, before I had the honor to be in your employ."

"Tranquilino," said Patsy, "I have been listening to you."

"Si, señor."

"If you take us to those we are chasing, without loss of time; if you can bring us to them before darkness settles down to-night, I will fill both your hands with gold, as much as they can hold."

"Si, señor. It shall be done."

"Billy," said Patsy, a little later, as they were riding side by side toward the mountains, "I saw you questioning the captain about the treatment of—you know. Tell me what you learned. I hadn't the heart to ask questions, or to do anything save hurry things along."

"Huh! That captain is a surly brute. Worse than his brother whom we are chasing. I could get no satisfaction out of him at all. But I gathered from what the mate said—he seemed a decent enough chap—that Adelina had not been made to suffer any indignity, as yet. And just now we must remember that Von Huysen is too much in a hurry to get to the mountains, to spare the time for committing offenses. Believing that

he has his prey well in hand, he can afford to wait. That is your security—and hers, Patsy."

"If he has offered her an insult in any form," Patsy ground out between his teeth, "I will——"

"Hush, old chap! He has not—as yet. He has not had time. Only—we must overtake them before they get to the mountains."

On and on they rode, pushing their animals to the limit of their speed and toiling up the steady incline of the foot-hills which lead to the high mountains beyond.

They were already in a region that would have been called mountainous in any other part of the world; but when one looked at the lofty peaks beyond, these seemed but mole-hills on a plain.

At six o'clock they stopped to water their horses and to let them breathe for a few minutes. It was mid-summer, remember, in that part of the world, and there was yet almost two hours of daylight ahead of them.

But even while they rested, Tranquilino scouted out ahead of them, returning when they were ready to mount, and announcing:

"We should come up with them in two hours more, at the rate we have been gaining, señor."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Patsy.

"*Si, señor.* But we will overtake them in a bad place; a place where if they know that we are approaching, they can ambush us easily, and pick us off at their ease. It is my own opinion——"

"Well?"

"That it would be better to hold back and so give them a chance to go into camp; then we could steal upon them silently, and——"

"No, no. I will not hear of any delay."

"It shall be as the señor says."

Again the human bloodhound took the lead and led them as fast as their horses could travel along the trail that the fugitives had followed.

After a little, Patsy rode up alongside of him.

"What sort of a place is it, where you think we will overtake them, Tranquilino?" he asked.

"It is the beginning of a pass through the mountains, although you would not think so to look at it, señor. It is a freak of nature. Some time the ground was torn up badly right there. It is as if the Almighty picked up millions of tons of rocks in His hand, and then threw them down to earth again in a confused heap; and the trail winds through there, as a snake crawls, and up

above, to the right, high over the heads of all, there is a straight and narrow path along the very edge of the cliff. It is called the false hope, because in coming this way travelers who do not know better sometimes follow it."

"Well?"

"It is only to find that it ends in the air, and that there is no way of getting down—that is, with a horse. True, a man may climb down or up, if he is agile; but a horse, never."

A little more than an hour later Tranquilino pointed ahead of him.

"There," he said. "Do you see those mighty cliffs, señor?"

"Yes."

"It is the place I described to you. And now—do you see those specks, just moving toward the rocks?"

"I do. I do."

"If we ride out upon this plain now, they will see us, señor, and know that they are followed."

"Let them know it, then. Come!" And he urged his horse forward.

It was half an hour of rapid running across the plain that intervened between them and the beginning of the cliffs, and in all that time they did not get another view of the fugitives. Indeed, that one glimpse of them that Tranquilino had pointed out to Patsy, was the only sight of them they had at all until afterward.

But they were soon to discover that they themselves had been seen, for scarcely had they dashed into the gorge, which at the mouth of it was nearly half a mile in width, when the crack of a rifle and the whine of a bullet following closely upon it, informed them that the enemy had discovered them.

"That was uncomfortably close," said De Costa, smiling. "I think it went within about an inch of my right ear. Hello! There is another. Look out—Ah!"

One of his own men, he who had followed Tranquilino, reeled in the saddle and would have pitched out of it had not his master caught him.

"I think, Mr. Garvan, that we'd better hunt cover," he called out, as he lifted the man tenderly in his arms and carried him behind a mass of rocks that was near at hand.

But Patsy did not hear, for he had already dashed forward toward the place from which the shots had proceeded, and although there were several other reports in

quick succession, and the bullets whistled uncomfortably close to the young detective, not one of them touched him.

Patsy fired twice with his revolver, as he rode forward, each time at the spot where he saw a little puff of smoke; and his own shots must have gone close, for the firing of the enemy was stilled.

Suddenly he heard the clatter of horse's hoofs on the hard rock ahead of him, and, coming at that moment around a sharp turn in the trail, he saw two horsemen fleeing up the cañon ahead of him, and he saw that they were driving in front of them a third horse on which was a woman.

He raised his revolver quickly and fired at the man that was nearest to him; and he saw him sink down in the saddle and then slide out of it to the ground, while the horse, now riderless, galloped onward.

And then the other man did a strange thing.

He leaped from the saddle to the ground and let his horse go onward while he himself took to the rocks, thus deserting his prisoner, whom Patsy knew to be the woman, Anita—Adelina's maid and duenna.

But where was Adelina?

He pulled his horse up sharply just as a cry from her rang out sharply and clearly along the rocky walls.

"Patrick! *Querido mio! Aqui! Aqui!*"—Patrick Sweetheart! Here! Here! In her excitement she called to him in Spanish.

Patsy looked in the direction from whence the cry came, and there, high up above his head, clinging to the bare face of the cliff while he made his way along a narrow ledge that gradually mounted higher and higher, he saw Von Huysen. The German was carrying Adelina in his arms and holding her so that she afforded a shield for himself; and Patsy could see even at that distance that his sweetheart's hands were bound together and that she was helpless to resist the man who held her.

With one quick leap he left the saddle and ran toward the rocks, crying out as he went:

"Courage, Adelina! I am coming;" and then he began to work his way up the face of the cliff after Von Huysen.

As he climbed, he heard rifle-shots behind him. He was dimly conscious that bullets flattened themselves against the rocks near him as he advanced, but he was totally indifferent to them.

He was sensible, also, of the voice of Studley calling to him: "I'll cover you. Go on!"

Then there were more shots behind and below him, and the sound of galloping horses, and then all was still save for the noise he made as he climbed, and the rattling of loosened stones down upon him, dislodged by Von Huysen in his mad efforts to reach the top of the cliff.

But all the time Patsy never for a moment lost sight of the man he was after, and of the burden that man was carrying.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRAGEDY ON THE CLIFF.

Patsy gained steadily upon Von Huysen, and yet the German's lead was so great that the young detective saw that he must arrive at the top long before he could hope to overtake him.

What would he do then? Was there a way for him to make good his escape after he should have scaled the cliff? Or would he turn about and try to throw rocks down upon Patsy, who had so nearly overtaken him?

Patsy asked himself these questions, but although he realized the seriousness of the last one, he did not relax his efforts to overtake the man.

The narrow ledge which offered so frail a support to him, extended diagonally along the face of the cliff. In places it was wide enough so that he could leap from rock to rock; but there were many spots where he had to cling like a fly to the projections, and he could not help wondering how Von Huysen made it at all with the burden he carried.

Suppose the man should fall, with Adelina in his arms? He did not think to ask that question till he was half-way up the cliff, but then it occurred to him with sudden terror, for he knew that such a fall would kill them both.

From below he could hear an occasional shout of encouragement from De Costa, but he heard no word from Studley. He did not know that Studley was fifty feet below him, climbing also and using his great strength as he had never used it before, in a mad effort to overtake his friend and to be with him in what was to come.

Looking up always, with his eyes upon Von Huysen

and his burden, he saw the man at last pull himself over upon a wider ledge than the others. A narrow place enough, but nevertheless where he could stand upright for a moment.

He saw Von Huysen use his right hand to loosen a bit of rock, and then hurl it down the side of the cliff at him; but it whizzed harmlessly past him, ten feet away. The German's aim was poor.

He evidently thought so himself, for he did not make a second effort, but with another look around him he began to climb again.

And now the way was easier for him, and he made more speed. He was approaching the top of the cliff at a rapid rate now, and Patsy knew that he must soon be there.

Patsy reached the easier portion of the climb just at the moment when Von Huysen pulled himself to the top of the cliff and stood upright.

The young detective heard him laugh hoarsely. He saw him put Adelina down upon her feet and then push her roughly back so that she was sent reeling away from the edge of the cliff out of his sight. He saw Von Huysen reach now for his holster, which until now he could not get at because of the burden he had been carrying. He saw him draw the revolver from the holster, raise it, bring it to a level, and take deliberate aim at himself—and for an instant then Patsy believed his time had come, for he knew Von Huysen to be a dead shot if he had time to aim. He was a practised duelist.

And then a thing that was truly wonderful happened.

Patsy was dimly conscious of the rushing forward of a slight figure behind the man who was taking such deliberate aim at him.

She ran with her arms outstretched in front of her, bound together as her wrists were; and she planted both her small hands directly in the middle of Von Huysen's back with all the force that her slight weight could give to them; but it was sufficient.

She struck him just at the instant his finger was pressing the trigger, and the force of the impact sent him flying headlong out into space, over the brow of the cliff.

One shriek of mortal terror he gave; then his pistol cracked, even as he was in mid-air; and then down, down, down he plunged, striking a rock here and carom-

ing to another one there, rebounding again to still another, until at last he struck the bottom of the gorge within fifty feet of where Fernandez De Costa was standing, gazing at the scene.

"You saved your husband's life that time, girl!" Patsy called out to her; and he struggled on upward toward her again.

But even as he did so he heard her cry out again in affright, and for an instant he caught a glimpse of the savage face of José as he seized her in his arms and bounded away out of sight beyond the brow of the cliff.

He knew now why José had abandoned his horse in the cañon below. The renegade knew of an easier way to the top of the cliff, and he had hastened there believing he would be in time to go to the aid of his employer. He had not, however, been in time for that, but he had been in time to seize upon the prize himself, and now—

With one last mighty effort Patsy reached the top of the cliff and pulled himself over.

A hundred yards away, running like a hare and with Adelina tightly clasped in his arms, was José. He was making toward an opening in the rocks through which he evidently hoped to escape; beyond which there was doubtless a path that he knew well.

But as he ran, and as Patsy, out of breath as he was by his long climb, started after him with all the speed he could muster, there came still another figure upon the scene.

Tranquilino dashed out from between other rocks farther up the brow of the cliff, and ran forward to intercept José and his burden.

He was rather nearer to the opening in the rocks for which José was making than was the renegade, and José saw it; saw that he was headed off, and that now there was but little hope that he could escape.

But he was resourceful even in that extremity, for with a shout of defiance he leaped aside into a hollow space in the rocks, shaped not unlike a shallow letter U; and then he turned about, holding Adelina in front of him, and drew his knife.

"Back! Stand back!" he called out in Spanish. "If either of you come a step nearer I'll bury this knife in her heart;" and he held the murderous weapon ready to carry out his terrible threat if he was not obeyed.

Patsy stopped stock-still and so did Tranquilino. It was a moment fraught with awful consequences.

"José!" Patsy called out suddenly to the man. "If you will release your captive and let her come to me, I pledge you my word that you shall be permitted to leave here and go your way unmolested."

"Ha! You promise—yes," responded José. "But what of him? What of Tranquilino Luna? Will he promise as much?"

For the space of a minute there was utter silence while Patsy looked inquiringly at Tranquilino; and after the moment was passed, the man dropped his chin upon his breast, and replied:

"*Si, señor*; I will promise, also."

On the instant he heard that, José stepped out of his place in the rocks and carried the now unconscious Adelina to her husband and put her in his arms. Then he turned to Tranquilino.

"You did not like to make the promise, did you?" he asked.

"No. Only for the señor's wife I would not have done so, José."

"If you will come with me out among the rocks where there are no witnesses, I will fight you with—this," and he held up his knife.

"*Bueno*. I will go with you;" and he tossed away his pistols and drew his own knife; and the two, each half-Indian, disappeared among the rocks.

Patsy was scarcely conscious of all this. He was too busily engaged in restoring Adelina to consciousness; and by the time he had done so, when she had opened her eyes and smiled up at him and he had kissed her again and again until the roses returned to her cheeks and the smiles to her eyes and lips, De Costa and Studley and Terrence had also scaled the cliff and were beside him.

"What of Von Huysen?" he asked; and Adelina shuddered as he asked the question.

"He was dead before he struck the first rock in his fall," replied Studley. "The bullet that he intended for you, killed him. As he fell he pulled the trigger, and he must somehow have turned the muzzle upon himself. He was shot through the heart."

"Where is Tranquilino?" asked De Costa suddenly. "I thought he was here."

"He was a moment ago," said Patsy vaguely. "I gave José his life and freedom for releasing Adelina, and then he and Tranquilino went off among the rocks together."

"That means that only one of them——" began De Costa, but he stopped there, for they could see Tranquilino calmly approaching from among the rocks. He went directly to his master, took his hand, and kissed it.

"It is over, señor," he said simply. Then he turned to Patsy and the others and added:

"Five years ago José terribly wronged me, I need not say how. Now I am avenged!"

There remains but little more of this story to relate. Tranquilino was hurried at once to the nearest telegraph-station, and a message was sent to Adelina's father, apprising him of her safety. Anita was also unhurt, for when Patsy shot one of her abductors and the other one deserted her, she managed to turn her horse, and so rode back to safety.

Von Altberg paid the full penalty of his many crimes in suffering for the death of the *portero*, Pancho. He was executed in the prison-yard at Valparaíso, two weeks later, and he died like the coward he was, begging for mercy.

Madam and the baron sailed for Europe three weeks after the rescue of Adelina, and both were glad to accept their tickets home and a few dollars to get them to Paris. Charged with having engineered the plot which stole Adelina away, they both confessed, on condition that they might be allowed to go, and Patsy did not feel that he was called upon to provide them with the extra means he had at one time considered.

One month from the day of Adelina's return to her home after the abduction, she sailed, in company with her husband and father, for San Francisco, and Patsy, to use his own expression, was the happiest man in seven kingdoms that day. "My cup will be full to the brim," he told his wife, "when I present you to Nick Carter, my more than father."

Billy Studley remained in Valparaíso as manager of the affairs of Don Carlos, a position for which he was perfectly fitted.

And so the conspiracy of the spies, the plans of the plotters against a nation, the plots for personal revenge, all came to naught. Patsy not only won the game against them, but he won the happiness of his life in Adelina.

THE END.

The next number (583) will contain "A Mystery of High Society; or, Nick Carter's Tangled Puzzle."



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TALKS WITH OUR READERS.

One who was an engineer in the Dark Continent has the following strange story to tell our boys:

"Ah, but that's a big, ugly baste down there!" said my fireman one day.

"I looked over the side of the engine-cab, and set eyes on an enormous rhinoceros.

"Our road was the narrow-gage railway which runs from Mombasa, on the east coast of Africa, through equatorial forests and swamps to the upper Nile Valley.

"A few seconds later, as we came round a curve, I saw that there was some trouble with the rails three or four hundred yards to the east of the place, and stopped as quickly as I could, but was nearly ditched.

"Three rails on one side had been torn up, ties and all, and left tilted loosely. The ugly old beast had apparently come wandering to the line, and, not liking the looks or the smell of the iron rail, had given it a lift with her nose-horn!

"It must have required a tremendous effort to lift those rails and ties buried in the road-bed. Narrow-gage, of course, is not quite so heavy and deep-set as standard-gage track; but there is no doubt that these creatures are extremely strong.

"Hollis, my fireman, the guard, and I were two hours getting that track repaired before I dared run over it.

"About a week later the section-men reported the track torn up again in much the same way; and a few days after that a passenger-train was nearly derailed there. The next morning Mr. Sawyer, an official of the line, and two other Englishmen, came down on our train, armed with guns, to hunt for the mischief-making rhinoceros among the swamps and down the lake-shores.

"They did not find her. Mr. Sawyer was convinced, however, that the animal was a dangerous one to traffic, and on my next trip he gave me his gun, with express orders

that if I saw the rhinoceros I was to stop my train and try to shoot it.

"There were then but three trains over that part of the road, and the rules were not quite as strict as if it had been a hundred-train line.

"A locomotive-cab is no place for firearms; but we put our elephant-gun in the tool-box, and carried it there for a week or more. Hollis was on the lookout, and at last one day, on our outward run, he spied the quarry again, this time down among the sloughs toward the lake.

"There she is!" he exclaimed, in great glee.

"I cannot say that I was very enthusiastic; but orders are orders. I stopped the train.

"Hollis had brought out the gun. I took it from him, tried the lock, and looked up my extra cartridges.

"Hollis, you grinning young scoundrel," I said, 'you've got to help me in this rhinoceros-hunting, so come on!'

"We started down through the swamp. The rhinoceros had scented the train and made off; but we went round to windward through bog-grass, mud, and water, for half a mile or more, peeping ahead and listening all the time.

"There she is!" suddenly whispered Hollis excitedly.

"Sure enough, we caught a glimpse of the brute's black back over some reeds. I wasn't particularly joyful, for the running was bad if the brute should charge us.

"Hollis was in a perfect fever of excitement, but dared not even whisper. I determined to risk a shot.

"Stoop down, and I'll rest the gun across your back," I whispered to my fireman. He looked at me with pretty wide-open eyes, but he was game, and did as I told him.

"I then tried to aim at a point just back of the rhinoceros' fore shoulder; and I shall never forget how Hollis' red hair stood up as he squatted there with that big gun across his back, waiting for me to shoot. I must do him the justice to say that he kept quite still.

"I fired. The recoil of the big gun nearly knocked us both over. We heard a terrific snort, followed by a hoarse, bawling noise, as if of rage; then we turned and bolted like two madmen for the railway.

"Some parts of the way we were knee-deep in mud, but we never stopped until we were back in the locomotive and up in the cab.

"Not wanting to be chaffed, I told Hollis to say nothing of the adventure; but the guard of the train must have told, for Mr. Sawyer got wind of it and chaffed me unmercifully. He scoffed at the idea that I had done the rhinoceros any harm, and I did not much believe so myself.

"But on the return run, three days later, as we passed the place, we saw thirty to fifty hyenas down in the swamp, and knew well enough from this circumstance that the body of some large animal was lying there. I concluded that it was that of the rhinoceros, for we never saw her again."

Details of a safe robbery which easily puts to shame anything in that particular line ever credited to progressive American "yeggmen" were brought to New York recently by John L. McPherson and Simon Grant, expert divers, who returned from Haiti on the Atlas liner *Graecia*.

They made the discovery that a safe, containing valuables worth \$50,000, had been stolen from the admiral's quarters in the Haitian gunboat *Cret La Perriot*, which has been on

the bottom of Gonaives Harbor for five years. Haitian officials were astounded at the discovery, and could not find the slightest clue to the identity of the submarine thieves. That the job was done by Americans, who had learned of the treasure, was the suggestion of certain Haitian authorities, but the two divers repudiated the questionable compliment to American enterprise.

McPherson and Grant went to Haiti early in April, to explore Gonaives Harbor and recover, if possible, the safe's treasure and several hundred guns which sank with the ship. They are employed by the Larkin Wrecking Company, of Jersey City. The *Cret La Perriot* got in trouble five years ago with a German gunboat, the *Panther*, and her end came forthwith. The Haitian craft held up a German merchantman during revolutionary troubles in Haiti and seized guns and ammunition. A short time afterward the *Panther* got after the Haitian ship and fired on her. The captain of the latter craft, rather than let his ship fall into foreign hands, exploded a charge of dynamite in her and caused her to sink almost instantly. Several persons were killed, but the captain escaped.

It was known at the time that the safe in the admiral's quarters contained money and valuables amounting to upward of \$50,000, but nothing was done toward recovering them. The authorities explained their delay by saying that time would not change the location of the wreck or destroy the valuables, and added that when they needed them they would send divers down after them.

McPherson and Grant had no difficulty in finding the sunken gunboat or in locating the admiral's room. But when they sought the safe they found that it had been taken away. The condition of the walls where it had stood indicated that it had been removed recently. A thorough search of the entire surroundings was made, but no trace of the treasure-vault was found. The only conclusion was that thieves had taken it.

While on the bottom of the harbor, a few days afterward, the two divers had a thrilling experience, resulting from an earthquake-shock.

THE WRECK AT PINNOT RIDGE.

BY W. L. SUMMERS.

All day the wind had been howling round the house. We enjoyed the fire in our "den" at home too much to venture out after school into the storm. In the midst of our preparation for next day's lessons, a hurried knock at the hall door was followed by the entry of a fisherman from the village.

Father was wanted—a vessel was among the rocks at the extremity of Pinnot Ridge, and was sending up signals of distress. Books were hastily flung away. Dick Weston—who always worked in the evening with me—and I followed father out into the pelting rain.

"Keep out of mischief, boys," father exclaimed; and he strode on against the wind, leaving us far behind.

It was as much as we could do to stand against the wind, which seemed every moment to increase, and it was with great difficulty that we reached the beach.

There we found all the fishermen congregated in small groups about the boats.

Old Tom Bateson told us that an attempt had been made to reach the wreck, but that the boat had been upset, and two of the crew injured.

"Have they sent to Porton for the rockets and life-boat?" I inquired.

"Yes; but they won't be here in time. Another hour will see that craft broken up on the rocks. Like enough, too, the boat at Porton is wanted elsewhere, for the whole coast will be strewn with wreckage to-morrow."

Tom described the position of the wreck to us, but the darkness of the night rendered it invisible. A small brig had run on the rocks at the farther side of the Devil's Leap. Pinnot Ridge jutted out into the sea in a long, irregular neck of land for nearly a quarter of a mile. At high water its extremity was covered by the tide, but when the water was low two large rocks were revealed, separated by a narrow channel of water. This strait, it was popularly supposed, Satan leaped one day in sport.

The brig had gone between these rocks, and was grinding itself to pieces. It was too far from the end of the promontory for any of the crew to escape along the Ridge, even if it had been possible to get ashore from that point. But it was believed to be impossible to clamber out from the cliff along the Ridge to the "Leap," on account of the difficulties offered by the precipitous and slimy rocks.

Nevertheless, Dick and I, after making several unsuccessful attempts, had, on the previous Saturday afternoon, managed to reach the land side of the "Leap." But we nearly lost our lives while getting back after the tide had risen. Of this adventure we said nothing to our elders, fearing that we should incur blame rather than praise for our hazardous feat.

"I say, Fletcher, why shouldn't we carry out a rope to those fellows? We can climb along the rocks, as we did on Saturday."

"It's easy in calm weather and in daylight," I answered, "but I wouldn't trust myself on those rocks to-night for any amount."

"It assuredly won't be so easily done to-night," he answered. "But, to-day, we may save lives, while on Saturday we only wanted to prove our pluck."

He proposed to descend the cliff by the rough path we had made, and get round the Head onto the lower ridge. Here one of us must stay, while the other went his perilous way along the rocks. While speaking, he picked up a coil of cord that had been brought down to the shore ready for use.

I agreed to accompany him to the Head, which was tolerably easy to reach, as the cliffs protected us from the wind; but the darkness compelled us to feel our way cautiously. At the Head we had to pick our way down by the slight projections of rock until we reached the lower ridge.

We were still sheltered from the gale, but, on putting foot beyond, the wind met us so fiercely that we nearly lost our balance.

"It can't be done," I gasped.

Weston looked pale, but was determined to proceed.

"I am going to try, and I hope to be successful." So saying, he slipped off his ulster, and fastened one end of the cord round his waist, telling me to let it out freely as he went.

In another moment he disappeared from sight, and I

could only judge of his progress by the cord that I was letting out. About ten minutes had passed when a loud cheer from the shore made me wonder whether Dick's attempt had been discovered. The cord became slack, and there was no further pull upon it, until, afraid lest my comrade had fallen into the water, I tugged gently, and was much relieved when it was immediately pulled forward. Weston was safe so far.

The clouds were beginning to break up, and the moon appeared mistily through them. The light was sufficient for me to discover Weston resting on the narrow ledge. A shore-boat, manned by fishermen, was struggling in the waves, and Dick was waiting to see whether they would render his errand unnecessary.

The rescuers, pulling pluckily, had approached quite close, when the wind turned the boat completely over. Loud cheers on shore told me, a few moments later, that some, if not all, had escaped.

The attempt having failed, Weston turned and signaled to me to let out more rope. I uncoiled a good length of the cord, for I remembered that the narrow ledge, by which alone we had been able to make our way, ran steeply down. When Weston and I returned on Saturday from our hazardous experiment, this was nearly under water. The tide was now higher, and the huge breakers would make that portion of the journey extremely dangerous.

Watching his opportunity, Dick waited for a huge wave to recede, and then ran swiftly down the ledge until it rose above the level of the water, but not before a couple of waves had nearly washed him from his hold.

The ledge now ascended, and, as soon as he was beyond the reach of the foaming water, Dick turned and waved his hand to me. When he reached the highest point, the wind had full sway upon him. For a moment he staggered under the force of the blast. His cap blew off and was tossed about on the swirling waters.

Three times he tried to climb up and walk along the narrow ridge, but the wind was too powerful, and the third time a terrific blast threw him off his balance.

He must have fallen into the water had he not fortunately caught hold in desperation at a sharp, rocky projection that must have torn his hands terribly.

Almost before I had realized his danger he was up again, making a fourth attempt.

This time he threw one leg over the ridge and settled himself firmly astride, his scarf streaming out on the wind.

It seemed hours before he reached the end of this narrow path, and was able to descend again by some small ledges, until he was partially sheltered from the wind. Here he paused a while for breath, and then started anew. After a couple of minutes' easy progress, he came to the great difficulty that had almost baffled us in our previous trial.

A break in the ledge occurred, and a deep gully separated Dick from the rest of the promontory. It was not very wide—that was not the difficulty. But, in order to cross, we had had to clamber down the almost perpendicular face of the rock to a narrow platform, from which we had to jump to an equally narrow ledge opposite.

The feat was most hazardous, but we accomplished it on a still day, when there was comparative ease in bridging the gulf. With the wind blowing a tornado, it was impossible to calculate one's leap, and an inch too much or too little meant certain death to Dick.

He paused again when he arrived at this place; but time pressed. The vessel might break up at any moment, and the crew be lost.

He clambered down and disappeared from view. I waited anxiously to see him reappear on the other side. The rope remained loose in my hands for several minutes.

With a thrill of thankfulness I felt the rope become taut again, and observed Dick climbing up the precipitous rock. He had crossed the gully.

The main difficulty during the remainder of the journey lay in the extreme slipperiness of the rocks. He had now reached the portion which, at high water, was completely covered. The seaweed and green moss made the foothold very precarious. Stumbling and slipping, with many falls, he made his way to the farther end of the promontory.

The moon was again obscured by scudding clouds, so that I could no longer see Dick, but the rate at which he pulled out the rope convinced me that he had reached the extreme edge of the "Leap," and was pulling in the cord in order to coil it to sling on board the wreck. For the first time I began to think of success in connection with our mad undertaking. It would not be difficult to throw the cord a distance of thirty feet—and I imagined that the vessel could not be at a greater distance.

Again the moon shone out, and I obtained a good view of Dick standing on the rocks, poising his coil of rope. The first throw fell short, and Dick plumped down on the ridge while he pulled in his cord. The second time he threw with more vigor, but the wind carried the coil beyond the vessel. At the third effort the rope dropped across the deck.

It was my turn to do something. Clutching tightly the precious cord, I retraced my steps to the beach. The fishermen were preparing to launch a boat. I shouted to them to wait.

"Why did you call?" they demanded.

"We have put a rope aboard!" I breathlessly answered, showing the cord in my hand.

The men quickly attached a stouter cord, and when that had been drawn aboard, a strong rope followed, by means of which the crew might get to land. A basket was strung on, with guide-ropes, and a dozen strong arms drew it to and from the brig.

Before the first man had landed, a cry arose that the vessel was rapidly breaking up. The remaining mast broke short off, and fell across the "Leap." A splinter struck Dick on the forehead, and for a moment stunned him. Quickly regaining consciousness, he availed himself of his only chance. Cut off by the tide, he could not return by the way he had come.

He made a rush for the edge of the "Leap," undaunted by the spray and water. He attempted to "swarm" along the fallen mast, but, when he had nearly reached the wreck, the wind and waves proved too much for him. He relaxed his hold and fell into the surging waters.

His senseless body was flung unceremoniously against the side of the wreck, and was drawn on board by one of the sailors. As soon as the basket returned, Dick was placed in it and pulled quickly ashore. My father's prompt attention and surgical knowledge soon brought him round, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the last man safely landed before the rocket apparatus arrived from Porton.

Dick and I were the heroes of the hour, but especially Dick.

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